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Mysterious Death Leaves Many Questions Unanswered

Missing Journalist's Body Found

by Awad Abdel Fattah

The headless body of *Al Fajr* journalist Hassan Abd al-Halim was discovered December 20 by local shepherds. The discovery of the body near a Jewish settlement has caused deep concern among Palestinian journalists **(see editorial page 5).**

Hassan Abd al-Halim, who wrote for *Al Fajr* Arabic daily, disappeared October 3 as he was following leads on a story about fraudulent land deals in the West Bank in which Palestinians and Israelis, including government officials, were involved. Abd al-Halim's mutilated body was found 79 days later on December 20 by two Palestinian shepherds near Ramallah.

Israeli police identified the badly decomposed remains on the basis of the ID card found on the body. It was reported that remains of an exploded grenade were found next to the corpse from which the head had been severed. Israeli authorities claim Abd al-Halim was killed "while trying to put together a bomb or practising throwing a grenade."

Abd al-Halim's family and friends have strongly dismissed this explanation and instead charged Israeli authorities with direct or indirect responsibility for his murder. Hanna Siniora, responsible editor for *Al Fajr*, said he believes the murder was perpetrated on the basis of Abd al-Halim's efforts to expose the fraudulent land sales, which has become one of the most burning issues in the West Bank. The story has shaken Israeli government circles. Siniora said Hassan Abd al-Halim had asked not to have his own byline on the articles which included the names of local Arab land dealers (*Simsars*) appearing in *Al Fajr*.

The body of Abd al-Halim was laid to rest in his birthplace of Qatana near Ramallah December 22. More than 2000 persons from all over the occupied territories including the national institutions and members of the Arab press attended the funeral. The funeral turned into a large demonstration in which crowds chanted slogans condemning the murder and calling on Palestinians to cling to their land.

Eulogies were delivered on behalf of *Al Fajr* and the Arab Journalists Association. Ali Khalili from *Al Fajr* emphasized that "all attempts by murderers to silence the voice of *Al Fajr* will fail, and those who committed this crime will not escape punishment." He told the crowd that Arabic *Al Fajr* had decided to name its feature department after Hassan Abd al-Halim as well as designating in his name a yearly journalistic scholarship abroad.

Radwan Abu Ayyash, head of the Arab Journalists Association, condemned the murder and called on Palestinian journalists to be cautious and to follow Hassan's path in "exposing the conspiracies being woven against our people." Abu Ayyash said that a monthly salary will be allocated to Abd al-Halim's seven children and widow.

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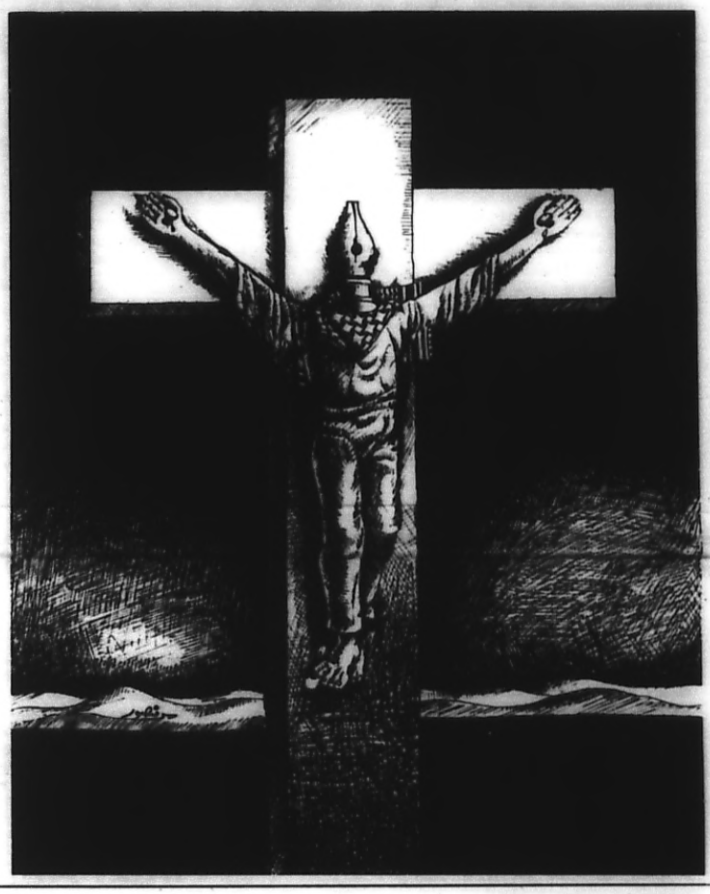

USING AIRPORT ATTACKS AS JUSTIFICATION

Israel Ready To Attack Syria, Libya

Tension heightened in the Middle East last week as Israel and the US announced their intention to strike at Arab territory in retaliation for the two attacks on the Israeli El Al ticket counters in Rome and Vienna December 27.

A total of 18 persons were killed and 112 others wounded during the simultaneous assaults. The Abu Nidal group, a splinter organization of Fatah which has been ousted by the PLO since 1974, claimed responsibility for the attacks.

The operations, however, have provided Israel with the justification for military retaliations. Israel, which was seen to be preparing for an aggression against Syria following the Syrian deployment of anti-aircraft rockets along its borders with Lebanon, has apparently found its excuse in the European operations. Libya, which did not condemn the two attacks, was singled out by the US. The US maintains that Libyan SAM rockets which are deployed on the Libyan coast endanger US navigation in the Mediterranean.

Top Israeli officials left no room for doubt that they will act militarily. Threats were voiced against Syria, Libya and some other Arab countries where Palestinian bases are located. The US even publicly gave the green light to Israel to retaliate. State Department officials announced that the US approves any measure against "terrorists". The Israeli press also quoted Israeli officials as saying the green light was given from Washington to Tel Aviv and that it is a matter of time before Israel strikes.

Shimon Peres, the Israeli premier, indicated more than once last week that Israel will retaliate "and preserves its right to act in the time and place it deems appropriate in order to defend its interests." Revenge attacks were also approved by the Israeli Knesset in its session to discuss the two operations. Peres, who spoke in the session, also severely attacked Libya as a "criminal state" and said that "the hands of Qaddafi are tarnished with blood."

In the US, Press Secretary Larry Speakes did not rule out the possibility of the US acting militarily as well. He affirmed that it is one of the options open to them. Speakes also stated that it would be appropriate for Israel to retaliate if the exact terrorists could be pinpointed. "We will do the same. We certainly favor retaliation against terrorists when they are identified," he said.

The two operations were strongly condemned by the PLO. A statement issued by the organization in Tunis categorically denied any responsibility for the attacks which took place on the soil of two friendly countries. The statement also expressed surprise at the Israeli accusations against the PLO. The statement

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Hunger Strike Ends in Victory for Detainee

by Karen Lende

Jabril Rajoub has won!

The ex-prisoner who was re-arrested November 18 ended his 34-day hunger strike Christmas Eve after his demands were met. Rajoub, who was being held under administrative detention and in solitary confinement, had been the victim of psychological pressure to sign a confession. His strike demands included a return to the main prison, an end to the pressure from interrogators, a trial and medical treatment.

Jawad Boulus, attorney for Rajoub, said he saw his client December 30 at Hebron Prison. At that time he discovered Rajoub had ended his hunger strike six days earlier. According to Boulus, Rajoub's morale is high and he sends greetings and thanks to everyone who worked to support his hunger strike. Rajoub also urged a local committee formed to support him to continue its work for other prisoners.

The end of Rajoub's ordeal is considered a victory by those, both locally and internationally, who supported his hunger strike. He is now being held in regular prison quarters with other prisoners, is no longer subject to interrogation by security forces and is awaiting a hearing which must take place before January 12.

Rajoub, 32, from Dura in the Hebron district, was released in the May 20, 1985 prisoner-exchange between Israel and the PFLP-GC after 15 years imprisonment. He was re-arrested on administrative detention orders and began his hunger strike the second day of his arrest. His attorney was refused permission to see him and was not given reasons for the detention. Boulus did not see Rajoub until December 3 at a hearing in a Ramallah Military Court. At that hearing, in which the judge extended Rajoub's detention an additional 22 days, Boulus was only allowed to discuss his client's health.

A later hearing scheduled December 17 was cancelled for 'technical reasons' as was a planned meeting between Rajoub and his attorney December 20. Finally, on December 22, Boulus met with Rajoub at Hebron Prison for 90 minutes. Boulus stated in a report of that meeting that Rajoub had lost 17 kilograms, that one of his kidneys was damaged, and that he was in a weakened state. Rajoub told his attorney he had been held in solitary confinement for his entire detention and that interrogators daily used psychological techniques to get him to sign a confession. Rajoub consistently told his interrogators that he would continue his hunger strike until his death or until his release.

According to Boulus' statement, Rajoub told his interrogators: "You treat me this way because of what I stand for. I am for coexistence and peace, based on mutual respect between the two peoples. You, who represent the fascist extreme of Israel, do not want peace and are threatened by people like me who are working for peace. Your treatment of prisoners is designed to kill the chance for a just peace."

On December 23 Rajoub was again brought to the Ramallah Military Court where his interrogators requested a 60-day extension of his detention without charge. The judge granted a 20-day extension. In the courtroom, Rajoub vomited blood.

Although precise details are not known, it is clear that sometime between the December 23 court appearance and December 24 Rajoub was indeed transferred out of solitary confinement and was promised a trial with charge or an unconditional release at the end of the 20 days.

Attorney Lea Tsemel spoke with Rajoub December 31 and said that he is recovering from his hunger strike, already having regained eight kilos, and is awaiting his hearing.

Since his release in May 1985, Rajoub had worked to develop a rehabilitation and training center in East Jerusalem for released prisoners in need of skills for gainful employment. He was to be director of the center but was arrested the day after it opened. The center is currently being run by local people.

While in Jnaid Prison, Rajoub wrote a book entitled *Cell Number 704* which details the mass hunger strikes of the prisoners in 1984 as well as general prison conditions.

Meanwhile, the "Committee to Confront the Iron Fist" was formed December 11 with the original purpose of lending solidarity to Rajoub in his hunger strike. Faisal Husseini, a member of the committee, told *Al Fajr*, "Jabril's situation was just the beginning and would soon be happening to others. We knew that once Jabril started his hunger strike he wouldn't stop until his demands were met and that we must support him or he might die."

Banners proclaiming Jabril Rajoub's demands hang outside the "Committee to Confront the Iron Fist" meeting in Jerusalem. Jabril Rajoub in inset./AO photo.

Even before the "Committee to Confront the Iron Fist" heard the news of Rajoub's victory, it expanded its scope to include issues affecting all prisoners and their families. According to Husseini, the committee's goals are: to end administrative detention and other administrative procedures violating internationally recognized rights to due process; to stop torture and harassment of detainees; to stop deportations and to allow the return of all deportees; to end harassment against the families of detainees and released prisoners, including house demolitions; to eliminate collective punishment related to the present "iron fist" policy, such as mass detentions and roundups; and to insure that the terms of the Prisoner Exchange Agreement of May 20 are upheld by all parties concerned.

In a meeting held December 31, the committee agreed to focus on two individual cases — that of ailing prisoner Dr. Azmi Shu'aibi who is slated for deportation and that of detainee Abu Ali Barham. The committee also decided to sponsor an International Day of Fast and Study on April 17, International Prisoners' Day. Events will be held locally on that day with simultaneous fasts and events taking place on the international level, including the participation of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) working on the Question of Palestine.

The committee, consisting of Palestinians, Israelis and international citizens living in Jerusalem, has formed several subcommittees to work toward achieving its goals. A letter from Jabril Rajoub was read to the group thanking individuals, organizations and media who worked on his case and who are dedicated to peace and justice in the Middle East.

Hebron Scene of Shootings, Curfew

An Israeli man was shot and wounded in the Hebron market shortly before noon December 23. In the aftermath, soldiers clamped down on city residents and also shot and wounded two Palestinians.

The 65-year-old Israeli resident of a village near Ramleh was shot in the leg while shopping in the Casabah market in Hebron's center. He sustained minor injuries and was able to call a unit of Israeli soldiers to the scene. He reportedly told them his assailant had been a woman. The soldiers, however, lined up persons of both sexes along market walls and searched them thoroughly. An eyewitness told *Al Fajr* market shoppers were forced to stand against the wall with their hands held high for several hours. The search was later extended to other areas around the center of Hebron. An *Al Fajr* source in the city said the Israeli soldiers rounded up some three dozen residents and took them to the military headquarters two kilometers outside the town center. It is not clear if and how many have been released.

The Israeli army then imposed a curfew on Hebron. Residents confined themselves indoors as a report came that an Israeli soldier had shot two Palestinian men in the city. Israel TV, which reported the incident, did not reveal their identities or the nature of their injuries. According to the TV report, the two men were shot after refusing to obey soldiers' orders to halt and identify themselves. Eyewitness reports were not available because of the curfew.

The center of Hebron remains under curfew.

Fatah Anniversary, Increase in Attacks Coincide

Israeli soldiers opened fire and used tear gas to quell demonstrations in Bureij Refugee Camp and Khan Yunis and Rafah towns in the Gaza Strip on the anniversary of Fatah's founding January 1.

Meanwhile, a Palestinian man was shot and wounded by Israeli troops in the Nablus area.

Reports said that the largest demonstration occurred in Bureij Refugee Camp in the central region of the Gaza Strip. A few hundred residents marched in the streets chanting slogans denouncing the Israeli occupation. Israeli troops, which were on hand in anticipation of demonstrations, opened fire on the crowd. There were no reports of casualties.

In Khan Yunis, demonstrators blocked the main street in the town with stones. Youths also hoisted Palestinian flags. Israeli troops quickly moved in, cleared the road and arrested a number of residents.

In the southernmost city of Rafah, youths stoned Israeli military vehicles which were on patrol in the streets. Troops opened fire on the youths and arrested several of them as they tried to flee.

In the West Bank, Israeli troops opened fire on a resident in the village of Deir Istia near Nablus and wounded him in the shoulder. Israeli military sources, quoted in the Israeli media, said that the man refused to comply with troops' instructions to stop for an ID check. He was transferred to Rafidya Hospital for treatment.

Meanwhile, Israeli military sources maintain that a sharp increase in military attacks has been observed during the past few days.

The sources attributed the sharp increase recently in attacks against Israeli targets in the Gaza Strip and in Israel to the anniversary of the founding of Fatah, according to a *HaAretz* Hebrew daily report December 31.

HaAretz reported that a sharp increase in armed attacks on Israeli military installations and personnel has been observed during the past 10 days. The paper listed at least four attacks involving grenade throwing and arson in the Strip.

The most costly attack occurred December 22, when unidentified persons set buses belonging to the Egged Bus Company at the northern entrance to Gaza on fire.

Families Lose Homes to Demolition, Sealing

by Baher Ashhab

Ten Bethlehem and Hebron families are now without homes or shelter. Israeli soldiers either demolished or sealed shut their houses last week.

According to UNRWA sources, Israeli military authorities bulldozed nine shelters housing three families in al-Fawwar Refugee Camp near Hebron. Each of the 10 families had young men in Israeli prisons on charges of belonging to the PLO. None of the young men has been tried as of yet.

UNRWA spokesperson in Jerusalem, William Lee, told *Al Fajr* that five of the nine shelters belong to UNRWA. The UN agency is planning to protest the measure to the Israeli authorities. Lee said that the Israelis have not demolished UNRWA-owned houses for such reasons since 1982.

Demolished home in al-Fawwar Refugee Camp near Hebron.

Soldiers demolished the three houses December 30 in al-Fawwar Refugee Camp, a few kilometers south of Hebron. The demolitions came 37 days after the arrests of Faisal Farraj, Khaled Sarahneh and Hassan Anati — all 21-year-old residents of the camp and members of the households whose homes were destroyed. Another house in the camp was sealed by soldiers. It belongs to the family of Ziad Sarsar, also 21. All four youths were arrested simultaneously on November 23 and according to an unconfirmed report were charged with membership in the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine. At the time of the demolitions, Israeli army units imposed a curfew on the camp for fear of resistance by residents.

Four days earlier the army sealed six homes in the Bethlehem area — four in Bethlehem and two in Dheisheh Refugee Camp. All six belonged to men currently detained in Israeli prisons. The six men, four of whom are related, were arrested December 13. They are Abed Farraj, Yihya Da'amseh, Yusef Hassan, Jamil Rabba'a, Musa Sineh and Muhammad Shukeh. Another Bethlehem resident, Ahmad Shahin, was also arrested with the others, but the military has not yet touched his house. The seven were charged with membership in the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command.

According to Labiba Da'amseh, the wife of Abed Farraj, some 200 soldiers helped to seal her house. They blocked all roads leading to Dheisheh Camp and gave her only 20 minutes to evacuate her belongings, she said. The soldiers were accompanied by the Bethlehem military governor and several officers identified by eyewitnesses as interrogators from Nablus Prison. Da'amseh told *Al Fajr* the soldiers were very abusive with one even hitting her in the face with the butt of his gun. When a young relative of hers attempted to protect her, he was taken away to the Bethlehem military headquarters and beaten. When contacted by *Al Fajr*, the young man said the soldiers warned him he would soon join Abed in prison.

The families of the arrested men have since been accommodated by relatives and neighbors. Some have applied to the International Red Cross for emergency relief and temporary shelter. Da'amseh and her two small children slept in the open for a night before finding shelter in a small room nearby. She awaits a promised tent from the Red Cross. In addition to her husband, a brother, two uncles and a brother-in-law are among the detainees.

Da'amseh and relatives of the detainees held a three-hour sit-in at the Bethlehem municipal hall to draw attention to their situation. They later met with Mayor Elias Freij who promised to visit them and use his influence to get emergency relief for them. So far, Freij has yet to visit the families or contribute in any way to their needs.

Jordan Prevents Shaka'a's Daughter From Crossing

Jordanian authorities are in effect holding Hana' Shaka'a hostage to her father's political stand.

Jordan is preventing Shaka'a, the 23-year-old daughter of dismissed Nablus Mayor Bassam Shaka'a, from returning home to the West Bank. Shaka'a believes this is a warning to her father to tone down his criticism of Jordanian policy concerning the occupied territories and the Amman Accord, *Al Fajr* has learned.

Shaka'a flew into Amman earlier in December after a four-year stay in the U.S. where she received a Computer Science and Mathematics degree. Upon her arrival, Jordanian intelligence officials confiscated her Jordanian passport and told her to report to their headquarters in Amman at a later date. When she did so, they told her she would be allowed to cross to the West Bank only if she promised not to cross back in the future. She refused.

Shaka'a is currently staying with a relative in Amman awaiting a change in the Jordanian position. She has not seen her family in three years.

Bassam Shaka'a told *Al Fajr* the Jordanians are using his daughter to pressure him into taking a "moderate" position on the Amman Accord and on the Jordanian-supported transfer of the Nablus municipality to CC Head Thafer al-Masri.

Abu Dis Closed Over Student-Administration Dispute

by Khalil Touma

More than 500 students will lose a full semester of study at Abu Dis College of Science and Technology this year. The college administration decided to close the school for a semester instead of responding to student demands for a student council like other colleges and universities in the occupied territories. This closure marks the climax of the student-administration dispute which has effectively crippled the college operation for the last five weeks.

In a statement published in local newspapers December 25, the Abu Dis administration said the student demand was refused by both the college's Academic Council and the Board of Trustees. The statement said the administration had offered the students alternative suggestions "to allow all of them to participate and to be trained in democracy within the known academic limits." The statement said the students refused. "Thus," the statement continued, "the college administration regrets the cancelling of the semester, in accordance with the Academic Council's decision of December 22."

The Student Coordination Committee, however, blamed the administration for the school's closure. The students said the administration has continued to refuse their legitimate demands and has not offered any suggestions. The committee said the administration refused any collective elections and had tried to divide the students. In its statement, also published in the local papers December 29, the committee stated that the students were told by the college administration that all decisions should be made by the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees in Kuwait, which is the main financier of the college. The Kuwait committee refused the student demands.

The committee said they were also told of a college rule prohibiting the formation of a student council. The committee denounced the school closure and the threats from the administration which insists on the unconditional return of the students to class before any discussion on the issue. The committee concluded its statement by saying that the college is not private property but rather belongs to the whole population. The students said they are determined to achieve their rights.

The closure, which is the first in the college's four-year history, has once again focused local attention on the recent problems in some of the leading higher education institutions in the West Bank. Foremost among them are Bethlehem and Bir Zeit Universities. At Bethlehem University, the student council recently suggested a number of academic and financial reforms in the university. After unsuccessful dialogue with the BU administration, the Bethlehem University students declared a full strike in protest January 2. They had gone on a sit-down strike earlier in the week where they slept outside near the university. The night strike is also continuing. In a statement published in *Al Mithaq* Arabic daily December 31, the head of the BU student council stated that talks with the administration were continuing but were as of late unsuccessful. He said the students reject the university's Academic Council response to their suggestions which was not more than an explanation of current academic policy. The student council also issued an appeal in local newspapers requesting all national institutions and personalities interfere and support the student demands and their strike.

At Bir Zeit University, a financial crisis has developed into an administration-faculty dispute. The Employees' Union has within the last two months struck in protest of an administrative decision to curtail some 40 percent of employees' salaries to cope with a severe financial shortage. The university is still far from reaching a solution and the union has threatened to step up its struggle if the administration enforces the salary cutback.

The educational institution crises have drawn responses from unions and student groups throughout the West Bank and Gaza. The Professional Unions Complex issued a statement of support for the workers and faculty at Bir Zeit University and described their opposition to the cutback as legitimate. The unions also backed students at Abu Dis and said in a statement last week that they should not be viewed by the administration as "heretic" or violators of tradition. The statement read that the "continuous polarization, the refusal of democratic dialogue and the lack of concerned parties taking part in solving the existing problems only serves the external enemies." The statement stressed the need for democracy in reaching a solution and called upon the Board of Trustees and the employees union at Bir Zeit University to begin a responsible dialogue on the points of their dispute.

Missing

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Press Conference

In a press conference held later in the week the AJA demanded an investigation into the murder. *Al Fajr* lawyer Jonathan Kuttab, who has been pursuing the case with Israeli authorities since Abd al-Halim's disappearance, said he found the behavior of Israeli authorities toward the disappearance of the journalist and after the discovery of his body "suspicious". Based on information provided by Abd al-Halim's brother, Muhammad, who identified the body, Kuttab concluded that two charges can be directed against the Israeli authorities: first, possible involvement by the Israeli secret service, and second, obvious lack of concern by police who made no effort to search for him.

Lawyer Kuttab told *Al Fajr* that from the beginning of Abd al-Halim's disappearance, he had approached the police about looking for the journalist in Israeli prisons. The police refused. A few weeks later, Kuttab heard from someone detained in Ramleh Prison that Abd al-Halim had been seen in that prison. Police denied this and asked the lawyer to prove it by bringing the informant to them. The police refused to give Kuttab guarantees for the safety of his informant so nothing more was done.

"However," said Kuttab, "when the body was discovered, we waited for the results of the autopsy, so that we could act." But to his surprise, the police, based they said on the autopsy report, merely reaffirmed their original opinion that the journalist died when an explosive charge went off in his hands. So far, the lawyer has not been allowed to see the autopsy report.

Abd al-Halim's brother, Muhammad, gave a description of the body at the press conference. His description contradicted the police account that he died in an explosion. "All signs indicate that my brother," he said, "had undergone very brutal torture before his murder." He explained, "the nails, some of his teeth and most of his body hair had been extracted and his head was cut off." He added that it was difficult to recognize the corpse without identification marks. "While the upper part of his body was burnt, the torso was in better shape," he continued. The journalist's brother also said a different pair of trousers were discovered on Abd al-Halim, suggesting that he was held for some period before he was killed. Speaking in a faint voice, Muhammad told the press conference his family learned about the discovery of Abd al-Halim's body the day after from some people and not from the police. He accused the police of negligence and lack of concern in searching for his brother. The family and people from his village conducted their own search without the help of the police. "When a Jew is missing, large police forces are recruited for that, besides thousands of volunteers," he remarked.

Kuttab told *Al Fajr* that the information given by Muhammad, besides the obvious lack of concern by the Israeli authorities in looking for the journalist, contradicted the Israeli interpretation that Abd al-Halim was preparing an explosive charge. He said that the corpse was without nails, teeth and hair, and that Abd al-Halim's glasses were found beside him intact. The journalist, who was legally blind, had sight too weak to prepare an explosive charge, he said. The body was found a few hundred meters from a military base and it seems impossible, said Kuttab, that the soldiers didn't hear the explosion. Finally, the lawyer said, the grenade left no hole in the ground.

Nevertheless, the Israelis continue to insist on their explanation "and this is what makes me and others more suspicious of involvement by the authorities," said Kuttab.

Efforts to expose those responsible for the kidnapping and murder of journalist Abd al-Halim continue. Abu Ayyash told *Al Fajr* that the AJA sent memorandums to international organizations asking for help in forming an investigative committee to look into the case. "Palestinian journalists will not tolerate such a crime which is directed at the right of freedom of expression in the occupied territories," said Abu Ayyash.

HASSAN ABD AL-HALIM'S LAST BYLINE

Following are excerpts from investigative report written by Hassan Abd al-Halim shortly before his disappearance. He asked that his name not appear on the article because he feared for his safety. The article included names of land dealers and important facts about the fraudulent land purchases.

"The land dealers employed all means of pressure, treachery and terror against the residents in order to force them to sell their land. Abdallah Salman Khalayfi from al-Jib village was subjected to threats of murder if he didn't concede to sell his land to the Israelis. But Khalayfi didn't succumb to the threats, and therefore the settlers carried out acts of sabotage against his land and crops..."

"The settlement Givat Ze'ev was built on Arab land owned by residents from al-Jib village. The owners don't know who sold their land. Barakat Audi said, 'I have 36 dunums on which buildings were set up. I don't know who sold my land. I wish I did know. I am ready to pay JDI000 (US$2,500) to know who forged the land documents...'"

"One resident, who preferred to remain anonymous, told me that a land dealer reserves for himself circular proxies and forged signatures of deceased people who have given up their land to him..."

Local Councils Suspend Strike After Peres' Promises

Pleased by their partial success, the Arab local councils in the Galilee and Triangle suspended their two-week strike December 25 to allow Israeli authorities to fulfill their promises. The Regional Committee of Arab Local Council Heads decided December 30 to suspend their strike for 10 days to allow the Israeli Interior Ministry time to transfer the rest of the US$6 million sum owed the councils in order for them to cover their budget deficit.

The suspension decision was taken following a meeting December 25 with the Israeli Premier Shimon Peres. Also attending the meeting were Minister of Interior Yitzhak Peretz, Minister-Without-Portfolio Ezer Weizman and other top Israeli officials. Part of the councils' demands were immediately met and others were to be discussed later.

In the one-and-a-half hour meeting, the secretariat of the Regional Committee presented the Arab councils' grievances and demands which led to a series of protest activities over the last few weeks. The financial situation of these councils has deteriorated into a crisis which threatens to stop services to a majority of the Arab population in Israel. The councils have thus demanded the government pay up to US$10 million for them to meet their expenses. An immediate amount of IS1 billion was requested in order to keep the councils functioning. The second topic discussed was the problem of unlicensed construction in Arab villages. Many houses are under threat of demolition. The total number of such houses is estimated at 7000. The third topic raised at the meeting was the Israeli plan to expropriate thousands of dunums of Arab land in an attempt to strangle the development of Arab cities and towns. This comprises large areas of the so-called "Area number 9" in the Sakhnin-Arrabeh regions in the Galilee as well as Nazareth, Naqab and many other villages.

The councils demanded the government cancel the demolition orders, establish local organization committees in villages of more than 10,000, and establish similar committees in each group of villages of less than 10,000. They also demanded the government allocate areas of state land to Arab towns and villages to solve their building and development crises. They also demanded the authorities raise the basic budgets of the Arab councils so they can increase the percentage of the population served by these councils.

Part of these demands were reportedly accepted immediately. The Israeli prime minister stated that he gave orders to the police not to demolish any of the unlicensed houses in the Arab sector. Israeli papers also reported that he instructed the Minister of Interior to transfer IS1 billion for development planning immediately and pledged to cover US$4 million of the financial shortage of these councils in three installments. US$1.5 million was to be transferred following the weekly Cabinet meeting Sunday December 29. *Al Ittihad* daily reported December 30 that the Cabinet decided to transfer US$6 million dollars to the Arab local councils in different installments. The paper, however, said that it is still not clear how or when the money will be paid.

Concerning unlicensed construction, the topic was postponed to another meeting and it was decided that the ministerial committee appointed earlier for this purpose begin its work quickly.

The Regional Committee had an immediate meeting following their session with the Israelis and decided to accept the sum offered by Peres. They also decided that the distribution of the sum among the councils should be based on a set percentage.

UN Condemns Terrorism

by Mansour J. Zoumott
Our U.N. Correspondent

The United Nations General Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution condemning as criminal all acts of "terrorism" December 9.

Assembly President Jaime de Pinies of Spain described it as "historic," and the Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar called it "a truly important achievement."

This resolution was not the first anti-terrorist resolution adopted by the General Assembly, seen by most diplomats as the most strongly-worded and broadest approach to such a critical subject. It has once again emphasized the need for all political revolutions to maintain proper 'ethical' principles, without having to go outside their immediate zones or directing their fire at innocent, non-combatant populations. In the last 10 years, according to a US count, the world witnessed around 5000 terrorist acts, with nearly 4000 lives being taken as a result.

Soviet Ambassador Oleg Troyanovsky, whose delegation supported the General Assembly resolution, said his country would have added the term "state terrorism" to the final wording to indicate raids by sovereign states on territories of neighboring countries. He gave examples of Israeli raids on Arab territory and US support of anti-government rebels in Nicaragua. Ironically, the General Assembly resolution was backed by both the Israeli and Palestine Liberation Organization representatives to the United Nations.

As for the US Ambassador Vernon Walters, he called the resolution "a symbol of new times." His country's figures show 1985 as a year that reflected the sharpest increase in terrorist attacks in years, covering as much as 80 countries all around the world. Western diplomats believe the Soviet Union, too, became more sensitive to the terrorism problem when, for the first time, four of its diplomats were kidnapped in Lebanon recently.

Israel

Continued from page 1

also affirmed its adherence to the Cairo Declaration which condemns military attacks outside the occupied territories. In an interview with Visnews, PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat also strongly condemned the attacks and accused unnamed Arab governments of being behind them.

A statement issued by the Libyan Foreign Relations Office was reportedly broadcast over Libyan Radio condemning all actions against innocents in an indication that Libya was not responsible for the attacks in Vienna and Rome.

The threats against Syria and Libya sparked immediate response from the Soviet Union, which has a treaty of friendship with both governments. In a statement to *Al Wattan* newspaper, Karn Brutints, deputy administrator of the foreign relations department in the Central Committee of the Communist Party warned Washington and Israel against any attack on Syria. Hinting at possible Soviet intervention, he affirmed that Syria will not be alone to face any aggression. Brutints said that the Soviet Union will adhere to its treaty of friendship with Syria. He also indicated that the aim of Israel's aggressive tone which is supported by Washington is to keep the situation tense in the Middle East. This is the core of the American-Israeli strategy in the region, he said.

In the Israeli Knesset, the secretary of the Israeli Communist Party, Meir Vilner, denounced the two attacks but warned Israel not to exploit them to wage war against Syria, Libya or any other country in the region.

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We Want Answers

Hassan Abd al-Halim was a freelance journalist from a small Palestinian village in the Ramallah area. His interest in journalism and his land cost him a high price. His life.

Hassan reported as usual to the offices of Al Fajr Arabic daily for whom he was working at the time. Though he was legally blind, Hassan worked hard on a story and solely supported his wife and seven children.

The last we saw of him was when he left the office following a lead on a story he was doing about West Bank land fraud. Some 79 days later his mutilated body was found near a Jewish settlement not far from his village of Qatana. He was found not far from the disputed lands on which he was preparing a report.

The Israeli army and police have a simple answer to questions about Hassan's death. Though they turned no stone nor spent any effort in a search for him or in an investigation of the circumstances surrounding his disappearance, they seem 'confident' as to the journalist's fate. Hassan was constructing a bomb, they say, when it exploded in his hands and killed him. For the disinterested public this explanation may be sufficient. After all, bomb fragments were found near the body, which had undoubtedly been torn apart.

For Palestinians, however, the answer is not so simple. For us the 'terrorist' being killed while preparing bomb story has grown old. Too many Palestinians have disappeared and too many corpses been found for the Israeli bomb-story to be believed. They tried the same tale when the Toubas youths were killed in a mysterious explosion last fall.

The most glaring question from this episode is whether Hassan was killed by an explosion or was blown up after he was dead, if indeed he was ever blown up at all and not merely mutilated.

The case of Hassan Abd al-Halim leaves many other tangible questions unconvincingly answered by the police.

If Hassan indeed died from an explosion as suggested by the army, why was there no hole in the ground where he was found? Why was his body discovered headless? Most explosions do not separate the head from the body. How could an explosion have occurred only 150 meters from a Jewish settlement without anyone hearing it? We can't help but feel that had the victim been an Israeli, the army would have been present at the scene within minutes.

Hassan's sight was very weak and it is logical to assume that he would be the last person attempting the intricate wire connecting required to construct a bomb. He was blind in one eye and had very weak sight in the other. Furthermore, Hassan's eyeglasses were discovered next to his body intact. Why didn't the explosion destroy his glasses?

Hassan's body when it was discovered showed him wearing a different pair of pants than the ones he disappeared in. This strongly suggests foul play. Another clear contradiction still exists. The police spokesperson said on Israel TV that Hassan's hands were completely blown off. Yet he told western journalists that his hands and arms were still intact. He was obviously trying to refute claims by Hassan's family that his fingernails had been removed which means that he must have been tortured by his abductors. Either way the spokesperson has got to be lying.

Hassan's killing was obviously deliberate and meant to halt his investigation into the land fraud in which top Israeli officials have been implicated. The only way we as journalists can pay tribute to Hassan and foil the efforts of his killers is to continue on his same path — that of the search for revelation of the truth about the thieves of Palestinian land and Palestinian rights.

Extremist Violence Spurs Need to Redouble Peace Efforts

by Daoud Kuttab

The recent attacks at two friendly European airports have drawn attention and criticism — it would be an understatement to say adverse publicity — from various parts of the world to the Palestinian cause. Regardless of the international casualty figures, it is apparent that the Palestinian people themselves are the biggest losers as a result of this senseless act.

We have lost a great deal in our struggle for recognition and credibility. For how can we explain this brutality done in our name? While it is possible to explain the frustrations which have built up over the years for Palestinians deprived of a just solution to their problem for over 35 years, it is difficult to explain these acts as the result of frustration.

The violent attacks against innocent civilians who happened to be in front of the El Al ticket counter will undoubtedly be understood by most peoples of the world as a terrorist action, whether we Palestinians understand it as the result of a complex set of rivalries or not. The attacks will be pinned on the Palestine Liberation Organization whether the PLO had anything to do with it or not. After all, the Palestinian people have become synonymous with the PLO. Palestinians keep saying that the PLO is their representative. Thus, the world believes that either the PLO represents us and is responsible for our actions or they do not represent us or take responsibility for us at all.

No one will be listening when we complain that the nations of the world refuse to deal with the PLO politically yet are eager to pin every act with any 'Palestinian' involvement on it.

This problem of PLO responsibility needs to be given serious attention by PLO leaders. It is no longer sufficient for them to condemn acts against civilians or to merely declare as Arafat did in Cairo a policy against terrorism. What the PLO needs is to demonstrate in an undeniable way its active opposition to acts of terror. This can be done by active cooperation between the PLO and the various sovereign countries in Europe and the Arab world in order to stop such violent actions.

The fact that the latest acts were carried out in two of the most friendly and sympathetic countries in Europe is very significant. While some may say that this Italian and Austrian sympathy toward the Palestinians is indeed what made such an operation on their soil easy for the attackers, others point to the serious attitudes of these countries toward terrorism. The only possible deduction then is that the perpetrators of the Vienna and Rome attacks intended to destroy the close relations between the PLO and these countries.

Ever since PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat made his strong declaration in Cairo against acts of violence outside the occupied territories, various Palestinian splinter groups have been busy attacking Arafat and trying to embarrass him. This is undoubtedly the work of one of these groups.

One of the most ironic things about the whole incident is that the Libyan news agency which praised the attacks said that they were meant to be a lesson to Arab regimes who have not provided enough aid to the Palestinians. While it is true that many Arab countries have been lax in their help for the Palestinians, this doesn't justify attacking innocent people at a European airport. If the Libyans feel that reactionary Arab regimes have not done enough for the Palestinians, then they should find a way to sort out their differences with the Arab regimes themselves. But to ruin the image of the Palestinians and to ruin relations between the PLO and two of the friendliest European governments is unacceptable.

The Abu Nidal guerrilla group accused of responsibility for the operations is not new to the Middle East scene. In fact, Palestinians and some of their most outstanding leaders have been the targets of this so-called Palestinian group. The Abu Nidal faction was officially ousted from the PLO years ago. Sabri a-Bana (Abu Nidal) has been tried by a Palestinian revolutionary court and sentenced to death in absentia for the crimes he committed against Palestinian leaders like Issam Sartawi, Said Hamami, Naim Khader and Izzedine Qalaq, just to name a few.

Palestinian leaders have often claimed that members of the Israeli Mossad and the American CIA have infiltrated the movement and instigated many of the most extremist operations carried out by renegade groups. With the sensitivity of the timing of this operation such accusations seem to bear more credibility. The Americans and Israelis were not very happy with the manner in which the present political process was being carried out. They weren't happy with the strong Palestinian-Jordanian ties and the international credibility recently given to the PLO. The possibility that the PLO would recognize UN Resolution 242 in return for a seat at the international conference was also frightening to the Israelis, as much as it was for extremist Palestinians.

Such an analysis means that actions by members of extremist groups are aimed at frustrating and derailing efforts worked out with painstaking detail by the majority of the people. Efforts to double the emphasis on peaceful trends becomes that much more important. Otherwise, avoiding the difficult and painful path of peace is exactly what extremists want.

The Palestinians themselves are the biggest losers in this senseless attack.

AL FAJR invites our readers to contribute letters, articles and opinions. Contributions must be signed, but names may be withheld upon request.

Political Force

Pollard and the Chill that Came in with the Spy

by Cosmo Luftmensch

Act One

The entrance to the Israeli Embassy in Washington.

POLLARD: Knock knock.

EMBASSY OFFICIAL: Who's there?

POLLARD: It's me, Jonathan Jay Pollard, the US Navy intelligence analyst who spied for you, passed secret information to you, and is now being followed by three FBI agents.

EMBASSY OFFICIAL: Go away. You're bad news. You're bringing in a chill in the special relationship between Israel and the US of A.

POLLARD: Come on guys, the FBI is hot on my tail. Now open up and let me in. After all, I am Jewish.

EMBASSY OFFICIAL: Beat it Pollard. And get yourself a good lawyer.

Act Two

Standing in front of the embassy, Pollard delivers a soliloquy as the FBI agents move in to arrest him.

POLLARD: How do you like that? After all I've done for Israel, I get the bum's rush. That's gratitude for you. Special relationship my ass! Israel's becoming an albatross and me — well, I'm just an excuse.

You see, the US wants to put a bit of distance between itself and Israel. No more buddy-buddy. It's for Israel's own good. Don't expect the money to stop pouring in. Think of it as image manipulation.

Take South Africa for example. Now, the US also has a special relationship with South Africa, but they don't boast about it. They don't go flaunting it. What good would that do?

THREE FBI AGENTS: Jonathan Jay Pollard, you're under arrest.

Act Three

At the Prime Minister's Office, Jerusalem.

US AMBASSADOR: Go ahead Mr. Prime Minister, say it: in-ter-national con-ference.

PRIME MINISTER: International... international forum.

US AMBASSADOR: No. Not international forum — international conference. Come on now, you know who your friends are.

PRIME MINISTER: Look, it's no skin off my teeth to say international whatever, but how am I going to get *them* to agree to my saying it?

US AMBASSADOR: Don't worry about it. Once you say it, everyone will start saying it. Now go ahead, say in-ter-national con-ference.

PRIME MINISTER: International conference without PLO representation.

US AMBASSADOR: International conference with a joint Palestinian-Jordanian delegation.

PRIME MINISTER: **International conference with a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation whose members have been approved by Israel.**

US AMBASSADOR: Now let's not quibble over details. Remember, your country has just submitted an aid request. Come on Mr. Prime Minister, it would make Ronnie so happy... In-ter-national con-ference. It's for your own good. Uncle Sam knows best. ■

Cusmo Luftmesch is the pen name for a free lance Israeli journalist

What Has the PLO Done to the Palestinian Cause?

by Abdel Karim al-Sharif

Ever since the departure of the PLO from Lebanon in 1982 the fervor and enthusiasm for the Palestinian cause have remarkably eroded and declined. Given the fact that the PLO had to stand all alone in the face of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon more than three years ago and that the chairman of the PLO was evicted from Syria a year later, together with the fact that a helpless Yasser Arafat patched up a totally unreasonable accord with the Jordanian regime last February, it is quite evident that the PLO has almost reached the stage of military and diplomatic bankruptcy.

Yet, Yasser Arafat is still the right figure to blame. His chairmanship of the PLO since the late 60s opened the door for unfit Palestinians so that they could join the PLO in order to get rid of abject poverty and in the hopes of earning good salaries and possessing lethal weapons for the purposes of liquidating personal grudges and practising hegemony on innocent civilians in Lebanon. Furthermore, the basic pillar of the PLO's struggle against Israel has notably been violent activities against civilian targets and populace. Thus, the tactics applied by the PLO have not been synonymous with those of a national liberation war whereby hostile military and economic installations are usually intermittently assailed.

Look at the Vietnam War. The Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese army used to often overwhelm the then-existing South Vietnam militarily in the true sense of the word. No acts of seizing civilian hostages for bargaining and making political deals ever occurred in Vietnam during its war, nor did the Viet Cong ever hijack any of the American airliners, although the United States was involved in the war. Therefore, the PLO can hardly claim it has been waging a true guerrilla war against Israel. Besides, the character of discipline was not to be found among members of the PLO when it was located on Lebanese soil and this fatal blunder facilitated the welcoming of the Israeli invaders by Lebanese villagers in 1982.

Thus, as a consequence of the violent campaign the PLO has been conducting and given the fact that the Arab confrontation states are both reluctant and unable to bear the huge sacrifices for supporting the activities of the PLO after so many harsh Israeli reprisals, the PLO has found itself losing popular and moral support in the occupied territories as well as in Europe, America and Africa.

Yet, the Israeli raid on the PLO headquarters in Tunis last October dealt a stunning blow to the PLO and the subsequent hijacking of the Italian cruise liner has greatly tarnished the image of the Palestinian Resistance Movement and has turned Yasser Arafat into a nomadic chairman, wandering in the Arab World for the purpose of finding a convenient haven and shelter for the headquarters of the PLO.

Still, most important of all issues, is the issue of legitimate representation. A political body is truly representative only after free elections are held which, supposedly, give it the face of legitimacy. How could the PLO claim to be the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people at a time when no free and unbiased referendum has taken place among Palestinians, and at this stage when the majority of the West Bank residents still hold Jordanian passports. Yasser Arafat had better know that not all Palestinians are stereotyped parrots. At this juncture, the Palestinian cause is going through the stage of euthanasia. Only a radically different situation in the Arab confrontation states would breathe life into the now-dying cause of Palestine. ■

Abdel Karim al-Sharif is a Jerusalem resident. He received his BA in political science from the University of Georgia.

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GAZA STRIP

Population: estimated 500,000
Refuges camps: 8
Settlements: 18
Area: 258 square kilometers
Municipalities, Village Council

The history of Gaza City and ... back to ancient times. It was built by ... rab tribes who immigrated from the ... und 3500 BC. Excavations, how... ree was actually inhabited long ... rabs named it the "Gaza ... -Abd Munaf, the ... ...ringnad. He died in ... ...ng Peninsula ... ...e of

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Saturday 1 — السبت ١

Sunday 2 — الاحد ٢
1917: Balfour Declaration
Arab Summit in Baghdad — Sanctions imposed against Egypt

REFUGEES REGISTERED WITH UNRWA

FIELD	IN CAMPS	NOT IN CAMPS	TOTAL
Jordan	201.750	597.974	799.724 (1)
West Bank	91.231	266.473	357.704 (2)
Gaza	236.486	191.406	427.892
Lebanon	135.941	127.658	263.599
Syria	72.569	172.077	244.626 (1)
TOTALS ALL FIELDS	737.957	1.355.588	2.093.545

(1) Figure includes 359.022 refugees displaced from West Bank and

Gravestones in Mamilla Cemetery are so damaged they are nearly unrecognizable.

Israel's Wrecking Ball Gives 'Face-lift' to Mamilla Quarter

by Awad Abdel Fattah

Standing not only as a symbol of lost grandeur but of current neglect a row of several story buildings casts a shadow on the carefully groomed lawns at the approach of Jaffa Gate. The buildings known as the Mamilla Quarter have served as a strong reminder of the Arab presence in West Jerusalem since the Israeli occupation of that half of the city in 1948. They now face imminent destruction.

In fact, last December 5 the Israeli Jerusalem municipality tore down one of the corner buildings in the quarter as the first step toward implementation of a Mamilla area plan. Their intention is to give a face-lift to this area so close to the tourist sites at Jaffa Gate and once the armistice line dividing Jewish West and Arab East Jerusalem. It not only gives a more polished look to this highly visible area but further underlines the Israeli claim to a 'united Jerusalem'.

The Israeli plan which was actually begun in the late '60s and completed in 1978 is only now being implemented after undergoing modification to suit the wishes of competing Israeli governmental institutions. Nevertheless, it is underway. It calls for the building of a commercial center, housing units, hotels and a major thoroughfare at a cost of US$120 million.

The recent demolition of the five-story building owned by the late Omar Joulani has again caused heated controversy over the plan. According to Israeli sources, the controversy in West Jerusalem is not over the injustice involved in demolishing Arab-owned buildings without the owner's consent and without fair compensation, but merely involves conflicting opinions on how to best make over Mamilla. From the perspective of East Jerusalem, the issue is seen more clearly for its political implications which center on the destruction of Mamilla as one more example of the continuing destruction of Arab property by Israel.

Mamilla is located just a hundred meters outside Jaffa Gate. Two rows of multi-story buildings on either side of Mamilla road stretch for a mile from the Old City gate to the modern Supersol supermarket on the west side. Most of the Arab names by which the buildings were known have been replaced with Hebrew names. However, the Arab names carved in stone over the doorposts have survived the Judaization process.

Occupation Divides Mamilla

Until 1967 the quarter was divided in two as a result of the 1948 war. It represented the dividing line between the two halves of the city. The half remaining under Arab rule stood empty, but the Israeli municipality was quick to use the half remaining under its control.

In 1948 the Zionist organizations waged an attack against the quarter surprising the Arab owners who fled their stores and homes and moved to the Arab-held half of the city. Omran Qumbuz, in his 60s, owned a cafe on Mamilla road. He recalls, "I left the coffee pot on the fire and hurried with my customers toward the Old City, as the Zionists suddenly rained the quarter with bullets." He added, "The Zionists didn't use heavy weapons. They just wanted to terrorize the Arabs and capture the area without causing damage to the property from which they wanted to benefit."

According to Qumbuz and others, there was no resistance from the Arab owners in the quarter "because it was not a military site. It was commercial which didn't constitute a threat to the Zionist organizations." Musa Bundali, 70, another Arab owner of a shop in Mamilla still lives only 300 meters from his shop. "I worked in my shop from 1930 to 1948," he said. "My happy life and prosperity was broken by the Zionist attack against Mamilla... Since then I haven't seen a good day in my life."

Most of the Palestinian shopowners thought they would be able to return as soon as the firing stopped. But weeks, months and finally years passed without them being allowed to return or to retain their properties. "At the very beginning of the Zionist capture of the quarter," said Bundali, "we could watch them breaking into the stores and taking over everything, while the Jordanian army which was in the vicinity didn't move to do anything under the pretext that it didn't have orders from above."

In 1948 Mamilla consisted primarily of stores, offices, garages, a hotel, a bank and a few houses. According to *The Jerusalem Post*, which researched the area, new Jewish immigrants who flocked to Palestine after the '48 war were settled in the Arab buildings and the shops turned mainly into garages and workshops.

The Jewish families numbering 330 by 1970, according to *The Post*, were then evacuated that year after being given compensation by the Israeli government in order to facilitate the proposed face-lift of the quarter. The Israeli plan calls for the further commercialization of the first half of Mamilla closest to Jaffa Gate. The second half was reconstructed long ago with a major hotel, supermarket, restaurants and a park built on it. The park was actually built on top of one of the most significant Muslim cemeteries in Jerusalem.

The original Arab owners, some of whom are still living and are resident in Palestine, have been unable to stop the demolition. Contrary to the circumstances surrounding the evacuation of the Jewish families, the Arab owners have not received any compensation. "I wonder," said Qumbuz, "how those who took over our houses by force could receive compensation, while we, the real owners, living in the place are neither allowed to return nor to get fair compensation."

Mustafa Joulani, the son of Omar Joulani whose building was demolished early last month, was not approached by the Israelis before they demolished his father's building. "We, the original owners of the property, are treated by the Israelis as if we are absentee owners or dead," he said. "I wouldn't go to see our building being pulled down, and if my father was still alive he would go crazy seeing his property become rubble."

Asked whether he or the others approached the Israelis about returning the property or receiving compensation, he said, "Some did, but they got nothing. I will not approach them. This is not an individual problem. It is a problem of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians... My problem is part of the general problem facing the Palestinians." Another owner said, "We have lost the whole of Palestine. Should we regret the loss of a house?"

Mamilla Cemetery

Passersby can barely see the Islamic cemetery at the end of Mamilla road which stretches over 134 dunums. From the outside, it resembles an unkempt park. With a closer look the general neglect and desecration of this important Islamic site is apparent.

The Israeli municipality has neglected the cemetery to the extent that it has become difficult to identify the remaining graves. A recent short study on Mamilla by the Jerusalem-based Arab Research Center states that 80 percent of the graves have disappeared in the "largest and most prestigious Islamic cemetery in Jerusalem, in which a large number of Islamic leaders and scholars were buried." The site is also important for its large pool dug deep into the stone dating back several centuries. *The Jerusalem Post* even ran an article on the cemetery neglect recently in which it said that dirt, beer cans and weeds could be seen everywhere at the site.

According to the Mamilla research done by the center, the desecration of the cemetery began shortly before 1948. "In June 1947, the British army occupied the land of the cemetery in defiance of the *Waqf* (Islamic Trust) administration." The *Waqf* objected on the grounds that it "caused disorder and opened the way for everybody to go in and out." The *Waqf* demanded at the time to appoint guards for the cemetery but their demands were not taken seriously by the British mandate authorities.

After 1948 the situation of the cemetery worsened. The so-called 'Israel Land Administration' confiscated the cemetery and turned it over to the Israeli 'absentee property' custodian. A spokesperson from the Islamic administration said the Israelis claimed in 1950 that the Higher Islamic Council had intended to use the land of the cemetery for economic projects. "But this baseless claim was a prelude for the building of Israeli projects in the cemetery and for desecrating its sanctity," he said.

The Plaza Hotel, a Jewish school and roads have since been built on the land of the cemetery. The rest of it has been transformed into what is now called 'Independence Park' with bathrooms from which sewage runs freely through the cemetery. Most of the graves have been removed and their marble headstones stolen. A *Waqf* spokesperson said that the Israelis simply wanted to wipe out all evidence which testifies to the Arab presence in Jerusalem, of which "Mamilla is one of the most outstanding and important testimonies," he said.

The *Waqf* has not only been deprived of the right of retaining the cemetery but also of overseeing its maintenance. Despite their negligence of the site, the 'Land Administration' and the Jerusalem municipality continue to insist on retaining the cemetery. "This is because giving back the cemetery to the *Waqf* would constitute a precedent by which other Islamic holy places in West Jerusalem could be returned," explained Meron Benvenisti, former deputy mayor of Jerusalem.

At this point, whether Israeli officials agree to hand over what is left of the cemetery or not, the crucial issue at stake is whether there will soon be anything left of Mamilla at all. Yet erasing the remainder of an armistice line does not mean that the symbol of Mamilla as a battered and divided bit of the even more battered and divided whole of Palestine will be removed from the hearts of those who remember a truly 'united Jerusalem' as it was. ■

1985 In Palestine

Al Fajr **Chronicles Last Year's Events**

The following chronicle of events includes major events in the occupied territories and outside which affected the Palestinian people in 1985. The events are as they appeared in *Al Fajr* news stories throughout the year. Two important episodes occurred in the last week and a half of December 1984 which were not reported in the last year's chronicle. The first occurred on December 20, 1984, when a fire at the Nablus District Courthouse destroyed thousands of important legal documents. The second was the assassination in Amman December 29 of Fahd Qawasmeh, a PLO Executive Committee member and head of the PLO Occupied Land Affairs Department.

January

3 — Israeli officials acknowledged that thousands of Jews from famine-threatened Ethiopia have been airlifted to Israel.
7 — Thugs rampaged through Dheisheh Refugee Camp near Bethlehem stoning houses and throwing Molotov cocktails at random.
10 — The Labor and Likud parties signed an agreement to build six settlements on the West Bank.
14 — The Israeli government approved a unilateral plan to withdraw its troops from Lebanon.
16 — Israeli soldiers teargassed Jnaid prisoners who were protesting overcrowded conditions.
21 — Mustafa Sa'ad, head of the Nasserite party in Sidon, was seriously wounded by a car bomb explosion.
22 — Israeli soldiers destroyed hundreds of olive and fig trees and grape vines in the Gaza Valley.
22 — Israeli authorities confiscated 2000 dunums of land in Samu' in the Hebron district.
23 — MK Muhammad Mi'ari, head of the Progressive List for Peace, was physically attacked by Kach supporters in Tel Aviv where he was giving a lecture.
28 — Jordanian Minister of Information Leila Sharaf resigned in protest of the Jordanian government's decision to increase restrictions on the local press.
29 — A protest movement to represent discriminated communities in Israel was formed.
30 — Settlers tried to expand a settlement near the center of Hebron.
30 — Law in the Service of Man issued a comprehensive report on torture at Fara'a Detention Center.
31 — The Arab local councils inside the 'green line' struck to save agricultural land in the Galilee after 1345 olive trees were destroyed.
31 — The Israeli government's Arabic language news organ *Al Anba'* was closed for financial reasons.

February

1 — Twenty-six youths from Dheisheh Refugee Camp as well as journalists Hamdi and Jamal Farraj were arrested on charges of incitement.
4 — Israeli soldier Aharon Avidar was shot dead in al-Bireh.
4 — The Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics reported that Jerusalem's Arab population was down 8 percent from 1972.
5 — Settlers constructed prefabricated houses on Dhahriya land.
5 — Dheisheh Refugee Camp residents held a press conference at Beit Agron exposing the arrests, beatings and armed raids made by the Israeli army and settlers against camp residents.
7 — A policy of deportation and administrative detention was reinstated by top Israeli officials.
9 — Residents of the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Galilee eulogized Fahd Qawasmeh in Nazareth.
9 — After a one-day strike by merchants, the Bethlehem Municipality rescinded a 4 percent tax on produce.
10 — The Israeli Interior Ministry forbade Muslims under 35 inside the 'green line' from traveling to Mecca for pilgrimage.
11 — PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat and Jordan's King Hussein agreed on a joint political platform.
12 — Twenty-three political prisoners in Neve Tertza women's prison began a hunger strike.
13 — The Israeli High Court in Jerusalem issued an order *nisi* halting the work of an Israeli construction company on Bidya land.
17 — Israeli authorities deported ex-political prisoner Abdel Aziz Shahin to south Lebanon.
17 — Palestinian women prisoners at Neve Tertza ended their hunger strike.
19 — Israeli soldiers set up roadblocks outside Najah University.
20 — Settlers attempted to expand their nucleus settlement in Tel Rumeida near the center of Hebron.
20 — The PLO Executive Committee endorsed the Arafat-Hussein accord.
20 — A petrol bomb was thrown into an empty Ramallah District Civic Courtroom.
21 — Israeli authorities tried to close Nuzha/el-Hakawati Theater.
22 — Asqalan prisoners started a partial hunger strike to protest overcrowdedness.
23 — Israeli solidarity groups demonstrated outside Dheisheh Refugee Camp protesting the detention of 35 camp residents.
26 — Husni Mubarak outlined a peace proposal based on inviting Israel and a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation for direct talks.
28 — Israeli police protected Kahane from Arab demonstrators at Hebrew University.

March

1 — The Israeli military raided Bir Zeit University and closed it for one week.
1 — Two students from Najah University were placed under town arrest.
3 — Following a grenade attack on the Israeli border police, a large number of Israeli soldiers raided Sa'ir village near Hebron and arrested 150 people, inflicted injuries on others and smashed windows.
3 — The Israeli government approved the second phase of its troop withdrawal from Lebanon.
4 — Jerusalem Municipality employees demolished two houses in Issawiya near Jerusalem.
5 — Students clashed at Islamic University in Gaza.
5 — Thirteen years after his death, the body of slain commando Abdel Aziz Rajoub was handed over to his family in Dura.
8 — Israeli authorities closed the new Bir Zeit University campus for two months.
8 — Local women's groups celebrated International Women's Day.
9 — Damoun prisoners began a hunger strike protesting prison conditions.
10 — UNRWA suspended 55 teachers working at a vocational training center in Gaza for refusing to turn in the names of students who allegedly vandalized center offices.
10 — Arab students at Haifa University and the Hebrew University in Jerusalem protested the 'iron fist' policy against Arab students in Israeli universities.
11 — Israeli troops massacred 40 Lebanese civilians in Zrariyeh village in south Lebanon.
11 — Mikhail Gorbachev, 54, was unanimously elected party secretary-general by the Soviet Central Committee of the Communist Party.
12 — Israeli soldiers received military training with live ammunition during which a women from al-Majd village 25 kilometers southwest of Hebron was killed.
14 — Local institutions and individuals in Jerusalem opposed new construction plans making major alterations in sections of Arab East Jerusalem.
15 — Palestinians in Nazareth and Kufr Yassif demonstrated demanding an immediate end to the Israeli occupation in Lebanon.
18 — Samir Ja'ja creates a split in the Lebanese Phalange Party.
19 — Israeli military authorities closed the UNRWA boys preparatory school in Kalandia refugee camp for one month.
21 — Israeli soldiers went door-to-door in Dheisheh Refugee Camp collecting census information on camp residents.
28 — Ihab Mana'a, a 17-year-old Nablus student, died from chest wounds received last December when he was shot.
29 — Israeli authorities 'observed' Land Day one day early in the West Bank by carrying out a number of pre-emptive arrests, heavily censoring the local newspapers, and stopping the distribution of the four Palestinian dailies outside Jerusalem.
30 — Ramallah Mayor Karim Khalaf died of heart failure.
31 — An Israeli settler Zalman Abulnik was shot dead at close range in al-Bireh marketplace.
31 — Israeli authorities closed 23 stores in the center of Ramallah for two months.

April

1 — Israeli soldiers shot and wounded four Bethlehem University students during a Land Day commemoration.
3 — The International Committee of the Red Cross and the US State Department as well as Israeli leftists condemned the transfer of 1200 Palestinian and Lebanese prisoners from Ansar Prison in Lebanon to Israel.
3 — Israeli military authorities prevented people from outside Ramallah from attending Karim Khalaf's funeral.
4 — Hundreds of Israeli border police stormed al-Ibrahimiyeh College in Jerusalem and arrested 132 students causing extensive damage to the college.
5 — Palestinian political prisoners at Asqalan Prison ended their strike and other protest activities.
6 — Ex-Jnaid prisoner Mahmoud Freitekh died in an Amman hospital from intestinal cancer.
11 — *Agence France Presse* published a report on Israeli military courts in 1984. In that year, 5226 persons were convicted as compared to 3339 the year before.
13 — Four Assyrian youths were injured in an attack on an Easter procession by an Orthodox Jewish family living near the Assyrian Convent in Jerusalem's Old City.
15 — Ramallah Municipal Council members rejected a proposal by Israeli military authorities to return to their municipal posts.
16 — Palestinian artist Suleiman Mansour was harassed and prevented from leaving the West Bank through the Allenby Bridge.
16 — Forty Palestinian figures from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip met with Richard Murphy, the US Middle East envoy, and exchanged views on peace prospects in the Middle East.
17 — An Israeli soldier, David Ben Shimol, who fired a rocket at an Arab bus in which 11 were injured was sentenced in Jerusalem Regional Court to life in prison.
17 — The Democratic Front for Peace and Equality held a press conference and protested harsh conditions at Fara'a Dentention Center.
17 - Prisoner's Day was widely observed in the occupied territories with a central rally in Jerusalem.
18 — A lawyer demanded through the Israeli High Court the establishment of a military appeals court in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.
19 — Israeli military authorities arrested 35 young boys from the village of Ain Arik on charges of throwing stones at Israeli vehicles.
19 — Israeli border guards killed a 12-year-old boy, Issa Ismail, and wounded Abd al-Hafiz Jodeh in Bureij refugee camp in Gaza while Israeli police were demolishing the house of Feda'i Fathi Garbawi who had been shot dead by Israeli soldiers the night before.
21 — Twenty-eight Palestinian commandos on the sea attempted to land near Tel Aviv but were intercepted by Israeli gunboats. Eight of the commandos were captured and the remaining were either killed or drowned.
22 — Israeli military authorities confiscated a five-and-a-half dunum plot belonging to Najah University in Nablus.
22 — Samiha Khalil, director of *Inash al-Usra* (the Family Rehabilitation Society) made an appeal for the release of her son from a Jordanian prison.
23 — A Palestinian taxi driver, Khamis Tutanji, was shot dead as an act of revenge for the killing four days earlier of an Israeli taxi driver in Jerusalem.
24 — Israeli troops pulled out of eastern Lebanon in compliance with the second phase of Israeli withdrawal and deployed along new lines six to 15 kilometers from the international border.
24 — El-Hakawati Theater received an anonymous threatening letter.
25 — Israeli authorities clamped a curfew on 20 villages in the West Bank as hundreds of Gush Emunim settlers staged a march from Salfit to Qalqilya.
26 — The Pharmacists Union in the West Bank and the Arab Medical Society in the Gaza Strip held a conference in Jerusalem and declared April 26 Palestinian Pharmacists Day.
29 — Israeli troops retreated from a 400-square kilometer area in south Lebanon.

May

1 — Israeli authorities prevented two West Bank labor federations from holding celebrations marking International Workers Day.
2 — The General Committee of Government School Teachers struck for two class periods to protest their decreasing salaries.
7 — After six days of an open strike, the employees of the Arabic daily *Al Quds* returned to work and won their demand to cancel the publisher's decision to pay salaries at the bank rate and not the market rate.
9 — Palestinians eulogized Karim Khalaf.
9 — After two years, the main entrance to Dheisheh Refugee Camp was reopened.
10 — *Mawakeb* magazine in Nazareth sponsored a Palestinian Thought Forum in which Palestinian culture before 1948 was discussed.
10 — Prisoners in Hebron and Tulkarm began a hunger strike protesting deteriorating prison conditions.
14 — PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat expressed his readiness to accept UN Resolution 242 on the condition that the US recognize the Palestinian right to self-determination.
14 — Udi Adiv, an Israeli prisoner, was paroled after serving two-thirds of his 17-year sentence on charges of spying for Syria.
14 — A 24-hour curfew was clamped on the town of Halhoul in the Hebron district.
15 — Three Israelis were arrested for the murder of Khamis Tutanji, a Palestinian taxi driver from Shu'fat.
19 — Israeli police shot and wounded five residents in Gaza.
19 — Amal began its war against the Palestinian camps in Beirut.
20 — 1150 Palestinian political prisoners were freed from Israeli prisons in a prisoner exchange agreement between Israel and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command.
23 — Settlers terrorized released prisoners in the Hebron district.
23 — The Israeli Army arrested 30 residents and demolished five homes in Saffa and Beit Ur al-Tahta.
23 — The Kach gang broke into the Red Cross office in Jerusalem.
26 — Four judges in the West Bank got light sentences for bribery.
27 — Government teachers struck for one day demanding better salaries.
27 — Palestinians in all parts of Palestine protested Amal's siege of the Beirut camps.
28 — Ex-prisoner Musa Odeh was released after five days of detention.
28 — Palestinian institutions condemned clashes at Bir Zeit University and Kalandia Vocational Training Center.
28 — Settlers escalated their campaign to release members of the Jewish terror underground.
28 — Settlers illegally occupied an Arab-owned home in Jerusalem's Old City.
29 — Tireh villages struck in protest against threats by racist Kach leader Meir Kahane to 'visit' their village.

June

2 — Israeli soldiers uprooted over 1500 olive trees belonging to residents of Obeidiya village east of Bethlehem.
2 — Palestinians in the occupied territories deplored the continuing massacres of Palestinian civilians in the Beirut refugee camps by the Shi'ite Amal movement.
3 — The Israeli Army bulldozers demolished 10 homes in the Hebron area on the pretext that the area was a closed military zone.
6 — Three Palestinian ex-prisoners were prevented from leaving the country for one year.
9 — Palestinian women prisoners at Neve Tertza Prison began a work strike to protest the official decision to integrate them with criminal prisoners.
10 — The Israeli army placed the village of Bidya and its neighboring villages in the Nablus district under curfew following a hand grenade attack on an Israeli vehicle in the area.
11 — A Knesset committee lifted the parliamentary immunity of MK Muhammad Mi'ari of the Progressive List for Peace on the pretext that he voiced support for the PLO.
13 — Israeli military authorities destroyed 10 homes belonging to Palestinian farmers in the Jordan Valley.
17 — Israeli authorities rearrested an ex-prisoner Ahmad Abu Tahan from Jabalya Refugee Camp.
18 — The Palestinian National Salvation Front, the Amal movement and the Lebanese National Front signed an agreement to end the battle between Amal militiamen and Palestinian fighters around the Beirut camps.
18 — Israeli military authorities demolished seven Hebron area villages displacing 200 families.
18 — Israeli soldiers put barbed wire on the roof of a private house in the Dheisheh Refugee Camp.
28 — World famous heavyweight champion Muhammad Ali visited Al-Aqsa Mosque.
30 — Najah University appealed the town arrest orders imposed on 10 university students.

July

1 — The Israeli government took steps to stabilize the Israeli economy.
1 — Israeli authorities prevented the Bank of Palestine in Gaza from issuing shares.
1 — Israeli authorities restricted the movement of the Progressive List for Peace spokesperson Kamal Daher.
2 — Israeli authorities closed the Hospice Hospital in Jerusalem's Old City.
4 — Thirteen Palestinian women from the occupied territories sent a message to the Nairobi Conference explaining that the socio-economic status of Palestinian women has deteriorated dramatically under occupation.
4 — Israeli police closed the Nuzha/el-Hakawati Theater for 24 hours and arrested three members.
7 — Hassan Beq Mosque in Jaffa was attacked by a masked man throwing two Israeli-made hand grenades.
7 — A weapons cache was found in the possession of Kach supporters from Eliezer settlement on the Bethlehem-Hebron road.
8 — Unidentified vandals sabotaged *Al Fajr* Arabic daily offices.
9 — Israeli authorities ordered Arab local newspapers to publish government notices.
9 — Samiha Khalil, one of the leading Palestinian women in the occupied territories, was denied permission to attend the UN-sponsored women's conference in Nairobi.
9 — Two Arab homes were demolished and a third sealed off in Surif village in the Hebron district.
10 — The 41-month-long trial of the Gush Emunim terrorist underground ended. The 15 defendants were found guilty.
10 — Saboteurs cut down 150 grape vines in Beit Ijza north of Jerusalem.
12 — Three women who were prevented from attending the Nairobi Conference held a press conference in Jerusalem.
13 — Prisoners began a hunger strike in three prisons protesting bad conditions.
17 — Palestinian members of the Jordanian-Palestinian delegation were chosen by the PLO.
18 — A new library was inaugurated at Bir Zeit University New Campus.
19 — The Israeli High Court issued an order *nisi* blocking the deportation of ex-prisoner Khaled Tantash.
21 — *Al Fajr* journalist Musa Jaradat was placed under his fourth town-arrest.
21 — An Israeli bulldozer destroyed an Arab-owned home in Sharfat village southwest of Jerusalem.
24 — East Jerusalem shut down in protest of the Hospice Hospital closure.
26 — Israeli residents in Afula rampaged Arab-owned shops and beat up Arab workers.
29 — Two Arab youths from the town of Toubas near Jenin were killed in mysterious circumstances.
30 — Following the killing of an Israeli, Nablus was placed under curfew.
30 — The PLO rejected the formation of a pro-Jordanian local committee to lobby for joint Palestinian-Jordanian political moves.
31 — Ziad Abu Ain was rearrested and held for six months under newly renewed administrative detention orders.

August

1 — *Al Shaab* newspaper was closed by the Israeli censor for three days for violating orders by the military government.
2 — Najah University was closed for two months.
4 — Arab local councils demonstrated in West Jerusalem to protest the Israeli government's failure to address their financial demands.
4 — Israeli cabinet adopted a tough policy against Palestinians including administrative detentions without charge or trial and deportation.
8 — Khalil Abu Zayyad was arrested and given 48 hours to appeal to an advisory committee before being deported.
9 — The Arab Summit Conference in Casablanca concluded its session.
10 — A settler was stabbed in Hebron.
10 — A Palestinian surgeon performed the first heart transplant in the Middle East.
14 — Israeli authorities notified Bani Na'im residents of their intention to confiscate thousands of dunums of village land.
15 — Twenty soldiers terrorized Sakhnin farmers.
15 — Israeli authorities rounded up 15 Palestinians and placed them under administrative detention.
16 — Israeli authorities arrested three Israelis and found fraudulent land documents in their possession. Thousands of dunums of Arab land had been extorted through violence and forgery.
16 — Bir Zeit University hosted a rural development conference.
18 — The tenth annual volunteer work camp in Nazareth ended.
18 — Israeli settlers from Kfar Etzion settlement in Hebron forced Palestinian farmers from the village of Surif off their land.
19 — Ziad Abu Ain was not allowed to leave the Ramleh Prison to attend his mother's funeral.
19 — Najah University held a press conference at the American Colony Hotel in East Jerusalem to discuss the consequences of the university's closure.
20 — Seven Israeli Knesset members vacated a Hebron house they had squatted in in the middle of the Old Casabah since August 15.
20 — The administrative attache in the Israeli embassy in Cairo was killed.
22 — US Special Envoy Richard Murphy did not meet the joint Palestinian-Jordanian delegation.
24 — Two Israelis were shot in Tulkarm and Jenin. Both cities were placed under curfew.
24 — The Progressive Movement held its first national convention in Nazareth at which it adopted a resolution to recognize and negotiate with the PLO.
26 — Israeli soldiers shot and wounded a Qalqilya resident.
27 — Emile Touma of Haifa, the Palestinian historian, died in the central hospital in Budapest.
28 — Khalil Abu Zayyad was forced to 'voluntarily' leave the West Bank for a period of no less than three years in order to prevent his permanent deportation.
28 — The Israeli authorities arrested three persons — Amin Ramzi Maqboul, Walid Nazzal and Bahjat al-Jayousi — and issued deportation orders against them.
30 — Fourteen people were arrested under the administrative detention orders.
31 — Eight Israelis from the organization Jews Against Occupation were arrested during a demonstration in Ramallah.

September

2 — The Israeli Military Objections Committee upheld deportation orders issued against three West Bank residents.
2 — Twenty Palestinians were arrested under administrative detention orders.
3 — Seven Palestinians were arrested under administrative detention orders.
3 — One Israeli soldier was killed and another seriously wounded in a knife attack in the Casabah market in Hebron.
3 — After nine years, the Israeli military handed over the remains of Khalil Abdullah Mustafa Awawdeh from Dura to his family.
6 — A bomb exploded at a bus stop in the Gilo settlement south of Jerusalem injuring six persons.
7 — The second general Islamic conference in Nazareth concluded and a demand for the return of Islamic land was made.
8 — An Islamic and Christian conference on better understanding at Tantur was concluded.
9 — Four residents in Hebron, including a 12-year-old boy, were shot and wounded by Israeli soldiers.
9 — Israeli authorities shut *Al Manar* press office for six months.
10 — 19 — Delegates from the American Ramallah Federation visited Jordan, Syria and the occupied territories.
11 — A Palestinian resident of Ramallah was shot and wounded by Israeli soldiers.
11 — Israeli soldiers stormed Asqalan Prison.
12 — Rafat Subuh and Muhammad Rimawi from Gaza were shot and injured by Israeli soldiers.
12 — Six Palestinians in the Jerusalem neighborhood of Sheikh Jarrah were wounded by an Israeli reserve soldier.
12 — Ishaq Da'es was wounded in Shu'fat by bullets from a passing car.
14 — Eighteen Palestinians were deported to Jordan.
17 — Munther Awad from Gaza was shot dead by Israeli soldiers.
17 — Sabra and Shatila massacres were remembered in the occupied territories.
18 — Jamal Awad from Gaza was shot and seriously wounded by Israeli soldiers.
18 — Najah University public relations office issued a statement disclosing that 32 students were personally affected by the harsh Israeli measures, including imprisonment, possible deportations and town-arrest.

Continued on page 13

Abortion Blunts Israeli Demographic Edge

by Michael Lowry

The concept of "Jewish demographic superiority in the Land of Israel" has always held a prominent place in the hierarchy of Zionist "values". Although usually discussed in a pseudo-rational manner, from time to time the concept runs riot with the reactionary imagination.

One such instance occurred in the late 70s during a Knesset debate on the criminalization of abortion. Titillating his fellow Knesset members with statistics on how many trooops had been lost to the Israeli army by terminated pregnancies, one of the clerical MKs argued that abortion negated the demographic aspirations of Zionism.

Meir Cohen-Avidov.

An analogous display of Zionist demographic obsessions occurred at the end of November 1985 when Likud MK Meir Cohen-Avidov — a colleague of Kahane in everything save party allegiance — proposed that the coming Hebrew year should be designated a "year of internal immigration." Israeli couples, he said, should make it their patriotic duty to be "fruitful and multiply."

One of the few participants in the ensuing debate who in addition to poking fun at Cohen-Avidov also denounced the implicit racism and sexism of the proposal was Citizens Rights MK Shulamit Aloni. At a time when we speak of democracy and equality, she said, it is unacceptable to advocate a "be fruitful and multiply" policy for Jews only. In effect, concluded Aloni, Cohen-Avidov is calling on us to burn all contraceptives and hound any woman who wants to abort.

All the same, the proposal was referred to the Knesset Labor and Social Affairs Committee by the votes of the Likud and the clerical parties against those of the CRM, Progressive List for Peace, Democratic Front for Peace and Equality; the Labor Alignment and Mapam abstained.

In the days that followed, Cohen-Avidov's proposed "solution" to the "demographic threat" facing Israel came in for a good deal of ridicule in the Israeli media. Yet the "problem" he addressed, in his own fanciful manner, did not receive the disparagement it so richly deserves.

The concept of "Jewish demographic superiority" is no laughing matter for the Zionist establishment. From the Labor Party's Jordanian option to Kahane's "final solution of the Palestinian problem," demographic superiority figures prominently as an accepted frame of reference in political debate.

The idea that there aren't enough Jews in Israel is the corollary of the idea that there are too many Arabs in the country. Hence, any growth of the Arab population of Israel is perceived as threatening to the maintenance of the "Jewish state". ■

To Advertisers

AL FAJR English weekly newspaper was established in 1980 as a supplement of the Arabic daily AL FAJR.

The English weekly AL FAJR has been growing ever since. Today AL FAJR reaches nearly 10,000 readers, many of them libraries and institutions who display the paper to a much larger constituency. Immediately after its publication in Jerusalem Thursday nights proofs of the paper are transferred to New York by plane. In New York the paper is reprinted and distributed to subscribers within a very short period of time.

The breakdown of AL FAJR readers by country is as follows:
2,000 readers in Jerusalem and Israel (mostly sales from newsstands and subscriptions).
2,000 subscribers in Europe, Asia and Japan.
6,000 subscribers in the United States.

The vast majority of AL FAJR readers are intellectuals, politicians and generally people strongly interested in the situation in the Middle East. A large number of these readers make frequent visits to the area and therefore would be target people for ads concerning travel arrangements, airplane tickets, hotels and restaurants in the area. A number of the European subscribers are members of solidarity groups and make frequent visits to the area on student passes. Advertising for low price housing in Jerusalem and the area would bring results.

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Arab local councils demonstrate in Nazareth against grossly insufficient budgets.

Economic Disparity

(Excerpts from an article by Atallah Mansour/*HaAretz*, December 22, 1985).

Assad Azaizah, head of the local council of the village of Daboriya at the foot of Mount Tabor, is one of the most successful Arab local council heads... This week, Azaizah was asked to prepare a report on the financial situation of the Arab municipalities by the chairperson of the Regional Committee of Arab Local Council Heads, Ibrahim Nmir Hussein. Azaizah did not disappoint the Regional Committee assembly, attended by 38 of the 46 local leaders, which convened in the Nazareth municipal cultural center. "The grave and intolerable financial situation which the Arab local authorities are experiencing," wrote Azaizeh, "is influenced by the economic crisis and primarily by the deliberate discriminatory policy practised by all government ministers toward the Arabs living in Israel since the establishment of the state."

Until 1976, the Interior Ministry allotted the Arab municipalities in Israel about seven pounds per capita. A Jewish settlement receives between five to 50 times the amount granted to an Arab settlement. Moreover, in the period between 1977-1983 — during which there was an improvement in the level of services even in the Arab sector — the level in the Jewish sector improved even more. According to Azaizah, "the gap remained unchanged and even grew in several instances."

He asserts that in 1984 there was a regression. The Arab local authority budgets are built on the basis of the previous year's budgets and cannot be expanded. "The cost of providing services rose more than the rise in budget allocations and the level of services and other municipal projects declined. In most of the local authorities, services have been reduced to sanitation and street lighting." In dollar terms, the Arab local authorities' budgets were eroded by a third over the past two years.

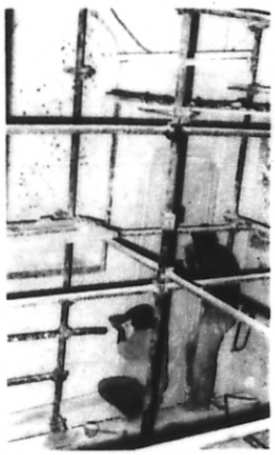
Azaizah denies the claim put forward by the Interior Ministry that the Arabs do not pay taxes. While the rate of property tax in Jewish municipalities' budgets constitute 18 percent compared to 15 percent in the Arab municipalities' budget, the amount actually collected in the Arab sector exceeds that collected in the Jewish sector on the order of 12 percent as compared to 11 percent. In contrast, the Arab councils' independent revenues have risen since 1984 from 20 percent to 30 percent of the overall budget. But government allocations dropped inversely from 30 percent last year to 20 percent this year.

Azaizah claims that while the total budget for local authorities is US 1.3 billion dollars, the Arab portion is only US 30 million dollars, or 2.3 percent of the total, even though the Arab population totals 12 percent of the overall population in all the local authorities countrywide. The amount budgeted per capita in an Arab settlement is about US 60 dollars, that is to say 25-30 percent of the average amount budgeted in the Jewish sector. Azaizah says that the Arab citizens in Israel pay US 400 million dollars in income tax but that less than 10 percent of it finds its way back to the local authorities. "Because of these facts and others," he says, "the accumulated deficits of the Arab local authorities amount to over US 10 million dollars. . ."

In November 1984, Shimon Peres met with the representatives of the Arab local councils and promised them to cover two-thirds of the deficit. The Arab sector fulfilled its commitment and covered a third of the deficit by raising tax rates. But the Interior Ministry has yet to fulfill its part of the deal. Three weeks ago [at the beginning of December 1985] the Arab local authorities launched a strike and that same day, the director-general of the Interior Ministry, Haim Kubersky, promised to transfer the outstanding funds — US 1.7 million dollars to cover the deficits and another IS1 billion for development — within a week. The ministry transferred IS2016 million to the Arab and Druze municipalities and regional councils with Arab residents. The Arab settlements received IS1481 million and the remainder went to the Druze and regional councils and mixed towns such as Akka...

The transfer of these funds and their allocation among the various settlements evoked a lot of questions and confusion over the Interior Ministry's judgment. Villages administered by Rakah — the Israeli Communist Party — received rough treatment. Kufr Yasif, Jedida, Makhar, Majd al-Krum, Askal, Yefieh Masha and Arabeh received IS10 million each. Ilaboun, Kufr Kanehm Turan and Deir Hanna didn't get a red cent. Nazareth got IS25 million. The Druze settlements all got big sums: Abu Shnan, Beit Jin and Peki'in received between IS30-65 million...

The discrimination between one village and another made for a certain amount of tension, but even those who received a larger slice of the pie are far from being able to solve their problems. Thus, it was decided to continue the strike. ■



The renovation team carefully prepares the gypsum. /AO photo

Al Aqsa Mosque in Midst of Renovation

Part I

by Said al-Ghazali

It is virtually impossible to picture Jerusalem without its Al-Aqsa Mosque, particularly for the hundreds of millions of Arabs and Muslims in the world. Jerusalem and Al-Aqsa Mosque have been inseparable since the mosque was constructed by the Umayyad caliph Abd al-Malik Ben Marwan from 709 to 715 A.D.

Yet there are those who hope for and actually plan for the destruction of Al-Aqsa. This kind of thinking took firm root after the war of 1967 when Israel occupied East Jerusalem. The Zionist dream to build or "rediscover," as they say, the Temple Mount on the site of Al-Aqsa was rekindled. This explains the Israeli Ministry of Religion's enthusiasm at starting excavations around the mosque in early 1968. Yet after years of excavations, the Israelis unearthed only the remains of an Umayyad palace constructed by the same caliph who built the mosque.

It is not particularly surprising that an Old City shopowner reported recently that an American Jewish customer of his came in to ask specifically for a picture of Jerusalem without Al-Aqsa Mosque. The shopowner said he laughed out loud at the request and told the customer it was impossible. To know the extent of such interest in the mosque's destruction one has only to visit the *Waqf* headquarters (Islamic Trust) to read the long list of attempts by right-wing Jewish extremists to break into the mosque compound, smuggle weapons into it, shoot at worshippers and attempt to perform prayers inside.

The same vision of Jerusalem without a mosque must have prompted the Australian Jew Michael Rohan to enter Al-Aqsa Mosque secretly before dawn on August 21, 1969, and to set the mosque ablaze. To Muslims he is guilty of attempting to destroy the third holiest site in Islam after the mosque of Mecca and the mosque of Prophet Muhammad in Medina.

The idea of renovating and maintaining the mosque has always been a relevant topic because of the mosque's position as a significant Islamic symbol in the hearts of millions of people ready to sacrifice in order to liberate it from Israeli occupation. Yet it became an issue of major importance only after the arson. The fire caused considerable damage scorching the southeastern wall of the mosque, its beautifully carved pulpit, the mosaics on the dome, some 80 stained glass windows and 12 marble pillars. Al-Aqsa Mosque or al-Harem al-Sharif includes all of the vast open courtyards, the *Mustabas* or grassy plains, the Dome of the Rock, the museum, the library and the gardens. The arson took place only inside the mosque itself where Muslims perform prayers and listen to the Friday sermons.

In the aftermath of the arson, rich and poor alike hurried to donate money and to urge those responsible in the Islamic Higher Committee to begin the process of renovation. At that time some JD80,000 (US$200,000) were collected and Al-Aqsa Mosque Renovation Committee was re-established. It was first established in 1954 to renovate both the Dome of the Rock and Al-Aqsa. A team of Egyptians was commissioned to do the work. They completed a certain amount but were stopped by the 1967 war.

Islamic architecture of which the mosque is a prime example cannot be preserved without workers or artists capable of reproducing the original work. Yet there are no in depth analytical studies on Islamic architecture and the methods needed to update it. The need to renovate Al-Aqsa Mosque served to establish such a team of workers who learned the traditional methods of carving, for example. Issam Awad, chief engineer of the renovation team, said, "There is a need to use modern technology in architecture. We have before us the example of Japanese architecture. The Japanese succeeded in preserving their architecture. We can do so by doing a lot of analytical studies as a prelude for the implementation of modern technology."

Islamic architecture is mainly seen in mosques, schools, old houses, bathing houses, palaces, old hospitals, markets, town quarters and other Islamic monuments in Iran, Egypt, Iraq, Pakistan, Syria, Palestine and Spain. In some areas the monuments appear luxurious and in others they are very simple. The climate, environment and economic conditions in each area have left their mark on the Islamic monuments. For instance, in Pakistan and Iran the mosques' yards are larger than the courtyards in Palestine. The materials used in construction differ from one country to the next. Yet the Islamic spirit is a unifying element.

The Renovation Plan

After studying the effects of the arson, the team immediately worked to provide the mosque with electricity and fire fighting equipment. The AMRC headed by the Jordanian chief justice drew up a plan of renovation in two stages: the first was to concentrate on securing the mosque's foundation and the second was to involve the restoring of mosaics and the other artwork to what it was before the fire. They also intended to correct the mistakes and architectural errors made by those who had renovated the mosque in previous projects.

At this point, the AMRC is nearly finished with the interior renovation after covering the external dome with lead, doing most of the mosaics on the internal dome, finishing the wall mosaics, restructuring the marble pillars and fixing the stained glass windows. Nothing however has been done on the rebuilding of a new pulpit. The AMRC has also brought together a team of engineers and experts whose job it is to keep the whole mosque compound properly maintained.

Engineers place together the pieces of marble needed to make one of the geometrical Islamic designs. /AO photo

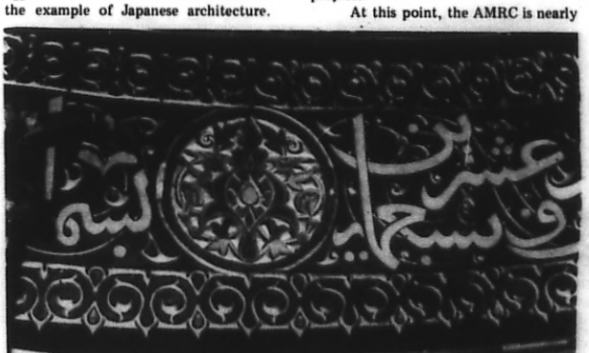
The First Stage

The AMRC first took a decision to complete the first stage and postpone the artistically sophisticated renovation until after liberating Jerusalem. Thus the work on fortifying the mosque's foundations began. On May 11, 1970, the AMRC began its work by erecting a temporary roof of asbestos inside the mosque to protect the dome. A group of Palestinian engineers contacted the Egyptian architectural office in Cairo whose engineers had renovated the inside of al-Harem al-Sharif between 1954 and 1966. The Palestinian engineers photographed all of the mosque in detail and documented the archeological information on arches, pillars, mosaics and windows before doing anything.

The workers then removed more than 1400 square meters of earth using primitive means because it was impossible to use bulldozers and other digging equipment in the excavations. About 353 cubic meters of reinforced concrete were laid along the foundation and 30 cubic meters were used in the bracing walls and bases.

The first stage was completed on June 11, 1975. According to Awad, the original plan caused a delay in continued renovation because it called for the liberation of Jerusalem first. However, in 1975 when it was apparent that liberation would not be imminent, the plan was changed and a decision to start immediately implementing the second stage of renovation was taken. "We further decided to help *Waqf* in renovating the Islamic museum and the mosque's library. The mosque's courtyards, *Mustabas* and gardens were also renovated," said Awad.

Continued on page 14



The mosaics and kufic inscription after renovation of the internal dome. /AO photo

ARAB PRESS

The pressures on the PLO to accept UN Resolution 242, the attack on the airports of Vienna and Rome and the signing of a Lebanese peace agreement topped the coverage of news in the local press this week.

Palestinian papers published in Jerusalem called on the PLO to reject the pressures by Egypt, Jordan and the US to accept the controversial UN resolution.

***Al Fajr* Arabic daily gave its lead story to Palestinian condemnation of the attacks in European airports. A special article signed by Responsible Editor Hanna Siniora said the aim of the attack was to foil the peace process.**

American Hostility

George Shultz seizes every opportunity to launch a violent attack against the PLO and its legitimate leadership. He uses all kinds of lies in an attempt to cancel the PLO role in the search for peace. Nothing the PLO did, such as the Cairo declaration and the saving of *Achille Lauro* passengers, would change Shultz's attitude. And when the Palestinian people stand behind the PLO as their sole representative then, in Shultz's view, this people does not have the right to choose its legitimate representative. Neither does it have the right to self-determination. Although the overwhelming majority of U.N. nations decided that the PLO, led by Arafat, is the sole representative of the Palestinian people, and that it should play a role in the peace process, Shultz does not hesitate to confront such a resolution. In the final analysis, we expect nothing from this secretary as long as the Arab situation remains as it is.

AL FAJR
December 20

Egypt and Its Role

We emphasized from the beginning that the Egyptian role is clear. It aims at selling the American scheme and expanding Camp David to include many Arab states. The Egyptian role became even clearer when Mubarak gave Arafat one month to declare his acceptance of 242 and 338 if he wants a place in the American liquidation plan. Mubarak's role at this stage is to continue pressuring the Palestinian leadership to accept the two resolutions, thus forfeiting the last card it holds. Mubarak's role stems from the many concessions by the rightist leadership. But our people aided by the Arab peoples is capable of thwarting all efforts to pressure the PLO.

AL MITHAQ
December 24

American Dancing

The pressure is growing on the PLO to accept the two Resolutions 242 and 338. This pressure campaign is being conducted by many parties all dancing to the tunes emanating from Washington which conditioned its starting a dialogue with the PLO on the latter's acceptance of 242 and 338. Husni Mubarak gave Arafat two months to declare his acceptance of 242 and 338 and said that Arafat would be the biggest loser if he didn't accept the resolutions. Though Palestinian sources affirmed that the PLO will never yield to this pressure, we believe that the pressure will continue until the American plan is enforced to the exclusion of the PLO. There is no need to re-state why the PLO should not accept the two resolutions. But we can say that accepting them is tantamount to political suicide.

AL SHA'AB
December 24

Amman... Damascus

King Hussein went to Damascus to restore relations to their normal conditions. Relations between the two countries worsened when Syrian media accused Jordan of sheltering some elements opposed to the Syrian regime. Jordan denied the accusation. Then Jordan supported Iraq against Iran, restored its relations with Cairo, signed the Amman agreement with Arafat's PLO and declared its acceptance of 242 and 338 and of entering into negotiations with Israel under an international umbrella. These are of course points of disagreement with Syria. They can be overcome. But how can the positions of the two sides meet? In our opinion, the American policy totally biased to Israel and ignoring the moderate Arab attitude, pushed the moderate Arab countries to reconsider their position. They realized that moderation is getting them nowhere, so they want to try the other approach. We do not expect this visit to bring about a total change. But it will be followed by deeper understanding toward taking a unified position on the Palestinian cause. It is obvious that some moderate Arab countries will join this new approach. All the Arab countries will eventually realize that the US is unified to assume the role of mediator. Once they come to this conclusion, it will be difficult to turn back from it. It will be too late for the US to return to its friends and supporters. Then the problem will follow the right path to solution.

AL QUDS
December 30

Palestinian - European Relations

When the foreign ministers of Italy and Austria assert that the attacks on Rome and Vienna airports will not affect their support of Palestinian rights, they also assert the failure of the planners of those two operations. The PLO condemned the attacks and denied any connection with them. It reiterated its position on terror as expressed in the Cairo declaration. Thus, the statements by the Italian and Austrian foreign ministers, together with the PLO condemnation of the incidents, perpetuate Palestinian-European relations. The perpetrators of the attacks were aimed at destroying these relations and at preventing the PLO from spreading politically through the world. They also wanted to annul the Cairo declaration and PLO legitimacy. But this 'will' which moves under an anonymous Palestinian address has really failed to realize its aims. The PLO, with its legitimate leadership, was bold enough to condemn these two incidents and other similar acts. The European countries led by Italy and Austria, were also bold enough not to abandon their principles and basic attitudes supporting the political move in the area and supporting Palestinian rights. Those two incidents might eventually be counterproductive.

AL FAJR
December 31

The Syrian - Jordanian Summit

What could emerge from the visit and talks conducted by King Hussein and President Assad? The most important answer lies perhaps in the fact that the meeting even took place though this answer loses its logic in light of the fragility of Arab differences which reach their peak then disappear overnight. If everything is possible in the Arab political life, this possibility is vital and necessary in the field of Arab and Western relations. The Damascus meetings care for this spirit. So, this rapprochement should be expanded to include Iraq and the PLO. Surely the tension in the area and US persistence in its position hostile to the Arabs leaves no room for any illusions concerning getting through Washington. It is hoped that 1986 will witness a unified Arab stand.

AL SHA'AB
December 31

Chronicles

Continued from page 8&9

18 — More than 50 women, all relatives of Palestinian political prisoners, started a sit-in strike at the International Red Cross office in Gaza.
19 — An Israeli settler was caught red-handed stealing topsoil from Tantur lands south of Jerusalem.
20 — Six-year-old Ayman Jundiya was shot dead in Gaza City by an Israeli soldier.
21 — The Islamic University Nursing School was temporarily closed under pressure from Israeli authorities.
24 — Jamal Awad, who was shot on September 18, died.
24 — Five-year-old Omar Shihab was critically wounded after being shot by Israeli soldiers.
24 — Marwan Jamjoum from Hebron was shot and wounded by Israeli soldiers.
24 — An Israeli killed a mentally retarded Palestinian in East Jerusalem.
26 — Kiryat Arba settlers rampaged through the Arab town of Halhoul.

October

1 — Eight Israeli warplanes attacked the PLO political headquarters in Tunis killing and wounding more than 120 persons.
1 — The five-month-old newspaper *Al Darb* was ordered closed by Israeli authorities.
2 — Amin Maqboul from Nablus, Bahjat Jayousi from Jayous in Tulkarm and Walid Nazzal from Qabatya were deported.
3 — The Palestinian journalist Hassan Abd al-Halim disappeared while on assignment for *Al Fajr* Arabic daily on the land fraud case.
6 — Israeli border police shot and killed four Palestinians and wounded another during an attack in the hills south of Hebron.
6 — Israeli vandals set fire to a Palestinian merchant's car on the road to Beit Shemesh.
9 — The drama aboard the *Achille Lauro* cruise ship ended when the four Palestinian hijackers surrendered to Egyptian and Red Cross officials.
9 — More than 80 Palestinians held in administrative detention began a hunger strike protesting their illegal detention.
10 — Merchants and students in Ramallah struck in protest of Israel's 'iron fist' policy.
11 — The regional director of the American-Arab Anti Discrimination Committee, Alex Odeh, was killed and seven others were wounded when a bomb exploded in the Santa Ana, California ADC offices.
14 — The Arab Journalists Association held a press conference and denounced attempts to silence the press.
14 — The meeting scheduled between a joint Palestinian-Jordanian delegation and England's Foreign Secretary Sir Geoffrey Howe was cancelled.
15 — An Israeli soldier was injured when a bomb was tossed at an Israeli army bus near al-Am'ari Refugee Camp.
16 — A mysterious explosion killed 15-year-old Bashar Abu Shaban and seriously wounded his 14-year-old companion Anwar Mahmoud Abu Musalam in al-Bireh.
17 — The Israeli censor banned *Al Bayader* magazine distribution for two weeks.
18 — The Israeli Knesset voted to strip Muhammad Mi'ari of the Progressive List for Peace of his parliamentary immunity.
18 — Two Israelis were stabbed in Nablus in two separate incidents.
18 — Detainees in Jnaid Prison suspended their hunger strike.
21 — Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres called for talks with Jordan in his speech before the UN General Assembly.
21 — Detainees in Beer Sheba Prison suspended their hunger strike.
23 — Israeli authorities arrested five persons from Nablus, Dura and Abu Dis under administrative detention orders. The number arrested under the 1945 British Mandate Emergency Regulations reached 104.
24 — Major Shlomo Leviatan testified in Jerusalem District Court that Israeli officials knew about the attack on Palestinian mayors in 1980 and that there was a festive atmosphere in the military headquarters. Leviatan said the military governors toasted the attacks on the mayors.
27 — Dentist Azmi Shu'aibi from al-Bireh, journalist Hassab Abd al-Jawad from Dheisheh Refugee Camp, unionist Ali Abu Hilal from Abu Dis and Zaki Statieh from Jabalya Refugee Camp in the Gaza Strip were arrested and slated for deportation.
31 — The former Italian diplomat Giorgio Giacomelli replaced outgoing United Nations Relief and Works Agency Commissioner-General Olef Rydbeck.

November

2 — After 68 years, the Balfour Declaration was remembered in the occupied territories with demonstrations and strikes.
3 — Israeli authorities issued new restrictions on the movement of local and foreign journalists reporting protests and demonstrations in the occupied territories.
3 — The four Palestinians arrested October 27 appealed to the Israeli High Court against their deportation.
5 — The Israeli military sealed off four homes in Jerusalem and Hebron owned by Palestinian families in reprisal against alleged military operations carried out by members of their families.
6 — PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat visited Egypt.
6 — The head of the Nablus Chamber of Commerce, Thafer al-Masri, filed a formal request with the Israeli authorities to take over the city's municipality.
7 — Yasser Arafat renounced terrorist acts whether they be carried out by states or individuals, but asserted the right to armed struggle in Israeli occupied territories.
8 — UNRWA approved the military's demolition of Jericho refugee camps.
9 — The first Anti-Racism Conference was held in Nazareth.
10 — The annual conference of Arab American University Graduates ended in Chicago, Illinois.
11 — The Israeli Military Objections Committee upheld orders to deport four men from the West Bank and Gaza Strip.
11 — Settlers shot a 17-year-old student from Kadri Tukan school in Nablus.
11 — Um al-Fahm was declared a city. It joined Nazareth and Shafa Amr as the third Arab city inside the 'green line'.
13 — The Islamic Trust Authority (*Waqf*) ordered mosque *Imams* to stop mixing politics and religion.
13 — Thirty Israeli bulldozers demolished refugee homes in Aqbat Jaber and Ein Sultan Refugee Camps in Jericho.
14 — Four visiting lawyers from Greece, Spain, West Germany and France held a press conference in Jerusalem and condemned the use of the British Emergency Regulations of 1945 to suppress Palestinians.
14 — Thousands of Orthodox Jews demonstrated against the building of a Mormon Middle East Studies Center on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem.
15 — Israeli soldiers opened fire on a Nablus youth, Sameh Nabih Hanbali, shooting him in the back twice as he entered a mosque.
17 — Student council elections were held at the Gaza Islamic University.
17 — Israeli authorities sealed three homes and demolished another in the Hebron district.
17 — Israeli authorities increased attempts to confiscate fertile lands in the Galilee.
18 — Jabril Rajoub, 31, an ex-prisoner from Dura in the Hebron district was arrested.
18 — Two Palestinian detainees — Ali Abu Hilal and Hassan Abd al-Jawad — ended a four-day hunger strike.
19 — Israeli police announced they would not prevent Jewish worshippers from entering Al-Aqsa Mosque compound to perform prayers.
19 — Israeli and Syrian air force jets clashed over Lebanon. Israel announced that they had downed two Syrian planes.
20 — Five French doctors appealed to Israeli authorities to rescind their expulsion decision and release Azmi Shu'aibi.
21 — The leaders of the Soviet Union and the United States concluded their summit meeting in Geneva.
23 — Israeli soldiers besieged Balatta Refugee Camp and arrested dozens of Palestinians.
25 — The Palestinian Central Council in Baghdad called on all PLO factions to attend an urgent meeting for the restoration of Palestinian unity.
25 — A settler was attacked in the Old City of Jerusalem.
26 — The Israeli 'civil administration' approved Thafer al-Masri's control over the Nablus municipality.
28 — Israeli authorities confiscated bundles of all four West Bank Arabic dailies.
28 — A Danish doctor was barred from examining prisoner Azmi Shu'aibi who was diagnosed as suffering from tuberculosis.
30 — An Israeli settler was shot and seriously wounded in Qalqilya.

December

2 — The first Monday of every month was designated by the Palestinian Center for the Study of Nonviolence in Jerusalem as a day to boycott Israeli-made goods.
2 — Prominent Palestinian lawyer Aziz Shehadeh was murdered in Ramallah.
2 — Arab local councils in the Galilee struck for one day protesting Israeli failure to pay their budgets.
2 — Golanis sent a letter to the Secretary-General of the UN demanding a commission of inquiry to investigate the injustices and oppression from which they suffer.
2 — Beit Safafa residents demonstrated demanding the removal of a hazardous Israeli railway.
3 — The American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee launched an anti-terror campaign against increasing domestic violence targeted at Arab Americans and their organizations.
4 — The Israeli Communist Party convened its 20th general conference in Haifa with more than 600 delegates taking part.
4 — Nine Palestinian figures from the West Bank and Gaza Strip met with the US Assistant Secretary of State for Near East Affairs, Richard Murphy.
4 — About 1500 Palestinian prisoners began a hunger strike protesting increased Israeli repression in the prisons.
5 — The Israeli municipality in Jerusalem destroyed an Arab-owned Mamilla quarter home.
7 — The Israeli Communist Party concluded its 20th conference.
8 — Two Israeli terrorists were pardoned by the Israeli president.
9 — Two ex-prisoners — Mahmoud Abdallah Ida'is from Bani Na'im and Yunis Salem Rajoub from Dura — were deported to Jordan. This brought the total number of deportees in the past months to 24.
9 — The Kalandia Refugee Camp entrance was reopened. It was closed on July 5, 1983.
10 — French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas met Palestinian figures in the occupied territories and said the PLO represents the "overwhelming majority" of Palestinians.
10 — Haim Cohen, former Israeli High Court judge, described administrative detentions, deportations and demolitions as "terror".
10 — Arab local councils declared an open strike after Israel failed to pay their budgets.
12 — Palestinian prisoners in Nablus' Jnaid Prison and Hebron and Jenin Prisons suspended their hunger strike.
15 — A mock international conference was held in Jerusalem.
16 — Student lists identified with the main PLO line won all seats in the student councils in elections at both Hebron and Bir Zeit Universities.
16 — 17 — Top Israeli officials threatened Syria if it did not withdraw missiles from the Lebanese border. The missiles curtailed the Israeli air force's freedom to fly reconnaissance flights over Lebanon.
16 — 20 — Thirteen Palestinians from the West Bank were arrested and held under administrative detention orders bringing the number so held since September to more than 100.
17 — A 12-member delegation of Palestinians was prevented from travelling to Amman to attend a scheduled meeting with the PLO chairman.
17 — Israeli and Palestinian figures met at a DFPE club in Jerusalem to protest the pending deportations of four Palestinians.
17 — Israeli soldiers laid siege to Najah University and stormed the student council and public relations offices. ■

Lebanese Peace Pact Signed

Lebanon appeared on the brink of a new era of national reconciliation last week after the signing of an accord in Damascus between the main militia groups designed to end sectarianism.

The agreement was signed in Damascus December 28 by Nabih Berri leader of the Amal Movement; Walid Jumblatt, head of the Progressive Socialist Party; and Elie Hbeiqa, the commander of the Phalangist Lebanese Forces. From the Syrian side, Vice-President Abd al-Halim Khaddam, who mediated the agreement, pledged his country's backing for the agreement.

The accords basically call for cancelling the system in Lebanon in which top governmental posts like the presidency, the office of the prime minister, parliament spokesperson, and other posts are allocated on a sectarian basis. This followed a 1932 census in which priority was given to the then majority Maronite Christians. The new agreement entails drafting a new constitution to replace the one which has been in operation since 1946. The change in the political system is to take place within one year, during which a Senate consisting of 198 members would be formed. This would replace the existing parliament which is also based on sectarian distribution. The accord also asserts the Arab character of Lebanon and calls for work to liberate South Lebanon from the Israeli occupation. The signators also agreed to form a new national government which would appoint the 198 members to the parliament for the transitional period.

WEEKLY REVIEW

December 19

PRISONER'S HEALTH CONDITION WORSENS

Ayyad Ali Saleh, 34, imprisoned under administrative detention orders, is suffering from a serious health condition. Ayyad, a student at Najah University in Nablus, was detained on August 28, 1985 and is being moved from one prison to another. He is currently at the clinic attached to Jnaid Prison near Nablus. This is the third time his health condition has deteriorated.

GAZAN SENTENCED TO LIFE IMPRISONMENT

The Israeli military court in Gaza sentenced al-Breij resident Jaber Mutlaq, 35, to life imprisonment. Mutlaq, a teacher in the Palestine Religious Institute, was charged with leading the military cells of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine in Gaza, participating in operations, possessing four pistols and two rifles and an Uzi machine gun, five grenades and planning to kill an Israeli intelligence agent.

December 22

BUS FIREBOMBED

A petrol bomb was hurled at an Israeli Egged bus near the town of Beit Sahur in the Bethlehem district, Israel Radio reported. No one was injured and no damage was done, the radio report said.

December 23

TWO BOMBS DISMANTLED IN ISRAELI CITIES

A bomb was found and safely dismantled in the Israeli city of Petha Tikva, Israel Radio reported. Police sappers exploded the bomb, which was placed outside a supermarket, without causing injuries. The explosion damaged two parked cars and shattered windows of a nearby shop. Later in the day, another bomb was found in Kfar Saba, northeast of Tel Aviv. Israel Radio said the bomb was planted outside the city's courthouse. Bomb experts managed to defuse the bomb without causing injuries or damage.

SAMU LAND GRABBED

Military authorities notified the *mukhtar* of the Abu Awwad clan, from the village of Samu in the Hebron area, of their decision to confiscate a 400-dunum plot of land west of the village which is owned by the clan. The landowners are now considering appealing to a military objections committee.

ADMINISTRATIVE DETENTION UPHELD

An Israeli military court in Nablus upheld a six-month administrative detention order issued against freed prisoner Lu'ai Abdo of Nablus, who was released in the May 20 prisoner swap.

Latin Patriarch Jacob Beltriti leads a Christmas Eve celebration in Bethlehem.

UNIONIST UNDER TOWN ARREST

Unionist Abdallah al-Karnaz, 21, of Dheisheh Refugee Camp was served yesterday with a town-arrest order. According to the order, signed by the military commander of the central region [West Bank], Karnaz is not allowed to leave the camp for the next six months and is confined to his home between 6 p.m. and 6 a.m. He is also required to report weekly to the police station in Bethlehem.

December 26

SENTENCES

The Israeli military court sentenced Nader Muhammad al-Ashhab to one-and-a-half years in prison and a similar suspended sentence for Fatah membership. He has been in custody since last May. The same court sentenced Nasser Mustafa al-Shawish to 15 months in prison and 15 months suspended. He has been in custody since last March.

The Israeli military court in Nablus sentenced Jamal al-Zaqleh of Tulkarm to 10 months in prison and a fine of two million shekels on charges of carrying arms.

TWO PRISONERS KILLED IN GAZA

Two political prisoners were strangled to death by inmates in Gaza's Central Prison who suspected the two were collaborating with prison authorities. Sami Musa Abu Hammad and Muhammad Zaki Azzam, both residents of Gaza, were found dead in their cell.

December 29

FAMILIES MAY VISIT ASQALAN PRISON

Israeli authorities have allowed families of prisoners held at Asqalan Prison to visit their sons. The prisoners refused to receive visitors December 28 to protest the failure of prison authorities to meet a number of their demands.

Al Aqsa Mosque

Continued from page 11

He further explained, "In the first stage we focused our efforts on doing the necessary construction and did nothing to renovate the mosaics, the pillars and the windows. We found ourselves responsible for doing a historic renovation but the time and funds were not sufficient. We needed a comprehensive budget designed for all kinds of renovations required in the mosque."

The AMRC still lacks a budget for carving the mosque's pulpit and for renovating the dome of the rock mosque. The renovation in the first stage cost JD200,000 (US$500,000). The funds for renovating Al-Aqsa came from regular donations from rich Arab countries and individuals. Yet the AMRC which is chaired in the West Bank by Sa'ed al-Din al-Alami, head of the Islamic Higher Committee, usually sends blueprints and detailed illustrations for the plan of renovation in a specific area to the AMRC chairman in Jordan. The AMRC then waits until it receives a budget.

The Second Stage

Immediately after endorsing the decision to complete the process of renovation in 1975, the AMRC contacted UNESCO and important international renovating centers in Italy and other European countries asking for experts. Contracts were signed by the AMRC and some foreign experts and companies which contributed plans for renovating the mosque's domes. The AMRC then began buying stone and marble from Italy, Tunisia, Jordan and the West Bank. Gold leaf was also bought from Italy and palm fibers were bought from the Gaza Strip and Jericho.

In the contracts with the foreign experts, the AMRC placed a condition that the foreign experts teach local workers the modern renovation techniques. The AMRC also sent some workers to Rome to take courses on color mixtures.

Internal Dome

The fire burned the internal dome damaging its mosaics and cedar planks. The inscription was also damaged. The first task was renovation of the mosaics which requires a process of various complicated and technical stages. Saif al-Din Samira, one of the workers redoing the mosaics of the internal dome, said, "It took us almost three years to renovate the writing and the Islamic designs." Samira explained the process he and three other workers went by: First, we filled up the holes with cedar planks, removed the burned paintings, fixed palm fibers, plastered gypsum and drew the inscriptions and other designs. Then we made carvings, polished the gypsum and then added the gold leaf to the relief and painted other parts of the design various colors."

The renovation of the mosaics is a detailed process which entails:

1) fixing the fallen gypsum (a special ingredient of Plaster of Paris) by injecting it with plastic, white glue and animal glue.

2) removing the burned paintings, the air bubbles, the melted plastic and the faded painting.

3) removing the burned cedar planks and replacing them with others stored in the mosque compound.

4) fixing the palm fibers on the planks.

5) plastering the planks with gypsum.

6) preparing the designs.

7) drawing the designs on gypsym.

8) carving the designs on the gypsum.

9) using sandpaper to smoothe the designs.

10) covering the designs with shellac to fill up the pores.

11) putting the gold leaf on the relief designs.

All mosaics of the internal dome have been completed and the workers are now fixing small wood pillars near the base of the dome. The dome itself has been completed and its designs of flowers and kufic inscriptions are superb.

It is very difficult to read the crooked kufic writing on the internal side of the dome. But if one climbs the scaffold leading to where a group of workers are finishing an artistic decoration, one reads the following paragraph written in Arabic around the dome: "By the name of Allah, the merciful, the compassionate, this blessed dome was renovated in the days of our master, the sultan, the king, the helper, the man of knowledge, the just, the warrior, the defender, the frontline soldier, the esteemed, the triumphant, the victorious, the creator of justice in the world, the Sultan of Islam, Muhammad son of the sultan, the martyr, the victorious King Qalawon Salhi. God bless him in the months of 728 Hegira." This was written 678 years ago and is the only writing on the dome. The inscription means that the dome was renovated by the Sultan Muhammad Qalawon Salhi in 1307 A.D. The rest of the decorations on the dome are flowers and leaves.

The External Dome

After collecting two-thirds of the budget required for covering the dome with lead (the cost is JD1.5 million or US$3.75 million), the AMRC signed a contract with the British Freeman Company in 1980. In April 1985 the work began and it was completed in September 1985. Four Palestinian workers received training in cutting and fixing lead. Awad said, "We can depend on them to cover the Dome of the Rock with lead in the future."

He explained that the Egyptians made a mistake when they tried to apply the modern architectural technology on the Dome of the Rock with no consideration for the fact that it is often incongruous with the older Islamic technique used in the mosque. It is not advisable to mix together the old and new techniques. In 1966 after the Egyptians covered the Dome of the Rock with aluminum instead of lead the roof leaked. Awad has plans now to change the Dome of the Rock back to its original lead covering. ■

Continued Next Week

TWO AMA'RI YOUTHS JAILED FOR STONE-THROWING

Two youths from al-Ama'ri Refugee Camp, Imad Arafat Libdeh and Jamal Musa al-Shu'ani, were sentenced to one-and-a-half years in prison and a similar suspended sentence on charges of stone-throwing. The two, in their early 20s, were sentenced by an Israeli military court in Ramallah.

THREE GAZANS GET STIFF SENTENCES

Muhammad Saleh al-Saiqali of Khan Yunis was sentenced to 15 years imprisonment and five years suspended by an Israeli military court in Gaza which found him guilty of attempting to kill a suspected collaborator, membership in a Palestinian organization and weapons possession. The court also sentenced Muhammad Abu Ukal of Jabalya Refugee Camp to three-and-a-half years imprisonment and one-and-a-half years suspended on charges of membership in a Palestinian organization and weapons training in Jordan. Fayez Abu Shamaleh, a resident of Khan Yunis who works as a teacher in UNRWA, was sentenced by the same court to 12 years in prison and six years suspended on identical charges.

UNION ASKED TO PAY HIGH TAXES

The Hotel Workers Union in Jerusalem has been told by the Jerusalem municipality to pay a sum of IS23 million as taxes or else face prosecution. The municipality is threatening to seize the union's furniture if the money is not paid.

RAMALLAH DOCTOR JAILED

An Israeli military court in Ramallah sentenced Doctor Muhammad Ahmad al-Halailah of Ramallah to six months in jail, 24 months suspended and a IS6 million fine on security charges. Another resident of Ramallah, Seif al-Din al-Halailah, was sentenced to four months in prison and one million shekels also on security charges.

BUS FIREBOMBED

Two petrol bombs were thrown at an Israeli bus as it passed near the French Hill, north of Jerusalem. No one was injured and no damage was done.

December 30

RANTIS LAND TO RETURN TO OWNERS

The Israeli military objections committee in Jerusalem revoked a decision by military authorities to confiscate land belonging to the village of Rantis in the Ramallah area. The committee decided to return 230 out of 307 dunums confiscated by the authorities to their owners. The owners are: Jaber Zaidan, Muhammad Hussein Balout, Hussein Naddaf, Ismail Ibrahim Ismail and Abdel Latif

TWO BETHLEHEM STUDENTS JAILED

An Israeli military court in Ramallah sentenced Abdel Razzak Farraj, of Jalazon refugee camp, to five years in prison and six years suspended and Khaled Abu Ali, of Jenin, to four years in prison and six years suspended. The two, who are students at Bethlehem University, were charged with membership in a Palestinian organization and carrying out petrol bomb attacks.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Readers are invited to advertise events free of charge: Wednesdays are the deadline for publication in the next issue.

SELECTED ORTHODOX CHRISTMAS EVENTS

For further information please contact the Christian Information Center at Jaffa Gate, Jerusalem. Telephone: 287647.

Greek Orthodox Nativity Church, Bethlehem: January 6 — The Syrian Bishop will arrive at Manger Square at 9:00 a.m., the Coptic Bishop at 9:30 a.m. and His Beatitude the Greek Orthodox Patriarch at 11:00 a.m. Services will be held throughout the day until 3:30 a.m.

Ethiopian Church, Old City: January 6 — Service at 9:00 p.m. and Liturgy at midnight.

St. James, Old City: January 7 — Greek Orthodox Liturgy at 7:30 a.m.

Mary Magdalene, Gethsemane: January 6 — Vespers at 5:00 pm. January 7 — Liturgy at 7:30 a.m. Telephone beforehand to check — 282897.

Ascension Monastery, Mount of Olives January 6 — Liturgy at 10:00 a.m. and Vespers at 5:00 p.m. January 7 — Liturgy at 6:30 a.m. and Vespers at 4:00 p.m. Telephone beforehand to check — 284373.

EVENTS IN THE US

December 17 — January 17

Exhibit: The Alif Gallery in Georgetown, Washington, D.C. is holding a special exhibit, "Ceramics from Jerusalem and Beduin Textiles." Many beautiful pieces are available for gifts.

EVENTS IN EUROPE

January 2 — 18

Theater: El-Hakawati Theater troupe is travelling to England to present *The Story of the Eye and the Tooth* at the Almeida Theater, Islington, London. All performances will be at 8:00 p.m. except for the premiere on January 2 which will be at 7:00 p.m. For further information ring (01) 3594404.

Palestine and People

* Former US Assistant Secretary of State **Harold Saunders** will be returning to Jerusalem January 17. He will participate in a panel discussion about the US and the Middle East sponsored by the Arab Council for Public Affairs. Saunders was here in mid-December at which time he represented the US in a simulation international conference.
* Israeli journalist **Yehuda Litani** will be moving to *The Jerusalem Post*. Litani, who has been known for his balanced writing about the Middle East in the Hebrew daily *HaAretz*, will become the Middle East editor at the *Post*. His appointment is part of a shakeup in the *Post* that has seen the promotion of **David Landau** to Executive Editor. The *Post* still has no correspondents for the occupied territories.
* British and Arab intellectuals have opened an information center that will become a link between the media and Palestinian and other personalities visiting the United Kingdom. The Middle East Resource Center, headed by **Marcus John**, will tackle hostile and inaccurate reporting of the Middle East in Britain. The center will promote pro-Palestinian commentators. Palestinian visitors from the occupied territories are encouraged to inform the center prior to their trips.
* The American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee in Washington, D.C. is looking for an executive director. **Omar Kader** who has been ADC's executive director for the past year has decided not to renew his contract citing professional differences.

Teachers

Continued from page 16

between what he has to teach and the existing situation. "I teach my pupils on cleanliness, the sunlight that should be let into the houses, the variety of food that is essential to the human body, the warmth and good airing needed in the house, while their own school does not enjoy most of these things and I personally know the majority of the pupils cannot apply these measures," he says. He does not dare to ask his pupils to buy shorts for the recreation period or to bring bus fare to go on a trip as stated in the curriculum. He knows full well that most of them cannot do so out of their poverty. His suffering is also enhanced as he tries to teach science without a laboratory or any teaching aids. Nidal, who finishes his teaching at about 1:30 p.m., needs nearly an hour to reach home. He then must spend three to four hours in preparation for the following day.

Musa

"The effect of the situation on the students is damaging," says Musa, 31, a teacher for eight years. From the preparatory stage (seventh grade) on, most students start to lose their enthusiasm for education, he says. They take the misery of their teachers as an example of what their future will be like. They wonder why they should continue their school education, and they eventually conclude that it would be far better for them to look for a job. So they start working after school, and some of them quit studying.

Musa stresses the fact that with the almost complete lack of the basic educational necessities, the government schools in the occupied territories have become like illiteracy campaign centers. Musa also deplores the lack of interest in the process of education and the suffering of the teachers by the national institutions. "Something urgent must be done. Otherwise the whole thing is doomed to collapse," he says.

Musa is from a village in the Hebron district. He is a Bethlehem University graduate in English. He has as well a diploma in education and another from a teachers' institute. His salary is US$180 per month. He has been recently under pressure from his family to get married for the villagers find it a shame that a man his age is single. But practically speaking he cannot do so on such a limited salary. His father offered to solve the problem by selling a piece of land to an Arab dealer but Musa categorically refused. How could he accept that? he asked. "The land is more dear than the soul," he said.

Now he shares a bedroom in a basement in Ramallah for nearly US$30 per month. He finds it so difficult to meet his personal expenses that he has been forced to reduce his visits to the family to just once every two weeks. Not long ago, he almost fell into marriage but recovered soon. He met a girl and loved her. They decided to get married, but her father refused because, as he put it, "Musa had nothing." When the girl insisted, her father agreed and made a list of demands for Musa totalling US$13,000. Musa had to disappear as he put it.

Musa hates walking in the city streets. He was frank enough to tell me that it is killing to see the people filling the shops and markets while he cannot meet his basic needs. But most intriguing was the way he and some of his poor colleagues have managed to deal with their social obligations. When they go to visit a friend on a certain occasion, they carry with them food instead of presents. One of their friends who is also a teacher in the same school got married and they had to visit him at home to give their congratulations. So they took with them some chicken and vegetables. They had lunch and congratulated him at the same time. 'Need is the mother of invention,' they say.

Salim

At one point, one or another of the teachers finds himself fighting back in at least a small way, possibly unconsciously breaking the school rules. This is what Salim did. Salim is a leading short story writer and author of a number of books in the occupied territories. Following the municipal elections in 1976, he was moved from the secondary school in his town in which he was teaching to another some 15 kilometers away. The written explanation he got for that was the removal was for 'political reasons.'

In 1979, following a strike in that school, he was again removed to another school 20 kilometers away. The following year he was transferred to another one in another region some 25 kilometers further. The village was nearly isolated from the rest of the neighboring towns and cities. There was no bus line, so Salim had to walk for nearly eight kilometers every day. He started at about 5:00 a.m. in order to be at school at 8:00 a.m.

One rainy winter day he was a few minutes late, so he went directly to his classroom. Wet and tired, the poor teacher so moved the school janitor that he hurried to him with a glass of hot tea. Salim enjoyed the refreshment so that he lit a cigarette and began to sip the tea in front of the students, despite his knowledge that such a display is forbidden. At that point, he says, he couldn't care less.

Only a few minutes later, he noticed through the window that the education inspectors had arrived on one of their sudden and unexpected visits. Salim thought to himself then that he should put out the cigarette and hide the tea, but he decided not to, thus putting the service of 18 years at stake. It ended peacefully, however, when the inspectors who caught him redhanded did not take any measures against him simply because they understood his case and sympathized with his suffering.

Exhausted, poor and suppressed nevertheless the teachers will continue to give their best to Palestinian youth. They must bring up the Palestinian generations to be a light in this utter darkness, and to one day solve the problems and end the suffering of their teachers themselves. ■

Teachers Faced with Abject Poverty, Yet Fight to Uphold Standard

by Khalil Touma

How strange! After over 30 years, one of my long buried memories of childhood called out to me last week, and I was able to recall vividly the resounding BOOM of the inkwell on the classroom wall which narrowly missed the face of the school principal. BOOM and the news broke out everywhere. The math teacher had gone mad.

I have seen the faces, read the expressions of hundreds of teachers who crammed into the hall of the Professional Unions Complex December 14 to celebrate Palestinian Teachers Day. There was a whole generation of Palestinian teachers who chose to resist, to struggle and not to surrender to frustration nor to escape into madness. The faces were solemn and serious, but bright smiles could be seen in the shining eyes, and every now and then the forest of hands clapped for a speaker expressing determination to overcome their misery. And a whole list of teachers' grievances was written in my mind. Oh my, has this profession, which was the goal of many until the 60s, become so intolerable?

For years now, under the darkness of the occupation which prevailed over the country in June 1967 these standard-bearers have been forced to wage a difficult struggle in defense of education and their standards of living. Both were severely hit by the occupation and the aim is clear. Palestinian youths are wanted as woodcutters and servants in Israeli institutions, a cheap labor force in a foreign economy which has swallowed up the market of the occupied territories.

Among the very first measures the teachers had to face was an attempt to impose the Israeli curriculum on the Arab students. The teachers went on a two-and-a-half month strike at the beginning of the first school year after occupation. The strike was successful and the Israeli attempt failed despite the fact that the Arab curriculum was nonetheless subjected to many changes and deletions aimed at the obliteration of national sentiments and ties with Arab history. Even some Quran verses and grammar drills were deleted as well as everything dealing with the Palestinian problem. As a result of the strike, scores of teachers were deported allegedly for being members of a clandestine teachers' union.

In 1972, an attempt to establish a teachers' union was rebuffed by the Israeli education officer, but this did not keep teachers from organizing themselves in separate gatherings to fight the continual deterioration of standards of living and of the general education. In 1978, district committees were elected by the government school teachers and out of these a general committee was chosen to lead the struggle. Thousands of petitions were later sent to the authorities demanding their agreement to the formation of a teachers' union and to an increase in teachers' salaries. But neither demand was met.

So teachers had but one choice — to declare an open strike on December 14, 1980, which lasted for three full months. The strike was ended after the authorities promised to work toward better conditions and after the teachers became concerned about the welfare of the students. The strike cost the teachers a great deal. Scores of them were arrested and many others either sacked, transferred to remote schools or had their rank within the hierarchy frozen, meaning no wage increases for years to come. They did achieve something though — the General Committee of Government School Teachers was undeniably recognized as the true representative of the teachers. The committee carried their case to the Israeli High Court clarifying the offenses of the authorities against the Jordanian Civil Service Law which by law should hold in the occupied West Bank. The court ruled that the case should be solved in meetings between the military authorities and the representatives of the teachers but the military governor refused to meet the teachers.

Ever since, the 14th of December commemorating the beginning of the 1980 strike has been designated Teachers Day and the struggle continues...

Palestinian students: their teachers hit with hunger and appalling teaching conditions are determined that their pupils do not become the ultimate victims of this Israeli war on education.

Nidal

"We do not have the luxury of planning for lunch in the morning or the night before. We only try to solve the problem of hunger when we feel it, simply because it is a burden, and we have nothing available to face it with," said Nidal (not his real name), a young government school teacher. "It is a wise thing to do. Don't come to troubles until they come to you," I said, and we shared a freezing smile. Winter loomed outside the window heralding imminent rain and the midday *Muezzin* (he who calls the people to prayer) was reaffirming his centuries old statement that "God is Great" and the undoubtedly hungry teacher was trying hard to disguise his shivering body under his light sweater.

There is nothing more painful than a journey into the burning inner desires of a young man full of ambitions, hopes, dreams and energy yet who finds himself facing an impenetrable barrier, chained with the enormous fetters of circumstance or locked in a cell. Nidal for a moment looked to me just like that. A father of three little children who supports his elderly father and two sisters, one of whom is a student in a Nablus college, Nidal and his family all live in a two-room house. He must meet all the basic necessities of their life together on a monthly salary of IS320,000 (US$190).

He has been a teacher for nine years and stresses the fact that he chose teaching as a career because he liked it very much. After he got a diploma in English from the Tulkarm Teachers Institute, he applied for a job and was hired in a small village school in the Ramallah district. There he taught English. His salary at the time was almost twice as much as it is now but with the rising inflation it has sharply declined. So far, he has been forcibly moved to four schools, all far away from his home. For teachers this is not a minor problem because transportation then absorbs a good part of their salary.

In 1984, following a one-day strike in the government schools, Nidal who is an active member in the General Committee was transferred as punishment to another village where he taught for two months. He was then transferred again, this time to two different schools. Each day he is in one of them, where he teaches anything but English, his major.

Considering that he spends nearly US$60 for transportation, he is then left with less than US$130 from his salary. "It is enough to cover other transportation, water and electricity expenses and to buy flour for the house," said Nidal. The rest has to be managed on credit. His father found a job recently as a guard in an Israeli company where he makes IS6000 (US$4) per day.

"Meat and fruit are nonexistent in our house. Breakfast is always tea and bread and lunch is either lentils or tomato with eggs or anything of the sort," Nidal says. He has been married now for five years and still has an ardent wish to buy a dress for his wife. He does not dare to do so. The four Israeli shekels (less than one American cent) which he is allotted in his salary for his wife are not sufficient to fulfill such a wish at present. He also feels that he should buy some clothes for his children, but so far he has not been able to do that. The family makes do with all used clothes donated to them by relatives who come from the Gulf once a year. This year he had to send a message through the bridge to his sister who was in Amman waiting for a visitor's permit. He had to ask her to forego the trip and instead send him the JD40 (US$100), the cost of a visitor's permit. This embarrassed him very much and he felt it was a shameful thing to do though he had no other choice.

His financial problems have also affected his social life. Frankly speaking, he says he cannot fulfill his social obligations to friends and relatives because this is costly. He remembers with apparent sorrow how one day he was obliged to sell his wedding ring in order to buy a present for a friend who got married. "Even this most valuable of possessions," he sighed.

The future for him is a fearsome wolf ready to devour him and his family. It pains him to think of his children who must be sent to school in the coming years. "Now I can manage with eggs and tomato, but what will I do when they grow up?" he asks. Nidal quietly, slowly tries to express a strange yet justified feeling of guilt, saying that what hurts him most is his feeling that he is not up to his family requirements. "My wife who labors very hard at home has the right as a human being to go out once in a while on a trip or to buy a dress for herself or something for the children. But this seems impossible, and I suffer for that," he says.

Nidal seems fairly convinced that the solution for his problem and those of others like him is not within reach in the near future. It rather entails a long severe struggle. That is why he is active in the teachers committee.

Despite all his misery, he is however dedicated to his job. He feels that the students should not be made scapegoats as they are also victims of the situation. He tries hard to do his job the best he can, but deplores the vast gap

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